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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 9TH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 25 September 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. MIN (Vice-President)	(Myanmar)
later:	Mr. GHEZAL (Vice-President)	(Tunisia)

- Address by Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti

- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Joshi (Nepal)

Mrs. McDougall (Canada)

/...

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

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Mr. Nastase (Romania)

Mr. Ellemann-Jensen (Denmark)

Mr. Kapllani (Albania)

Mr. Poos (Luxembourg)

Mr. Dreyfus Morales (Nicaragua)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Min (Myanmar), took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

ADDRESS BY FATHER JEAN-BERTRAND ARISTIDE, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF HAITI

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Haiti.

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Haiti, His Excellency Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President ARISTIDE (interpretation from French): I am happy to greet you on behalf of the Haitian people, whose hearts beat in time with liberty, pride and dignity: the liberty we have conquered, the pride we have rediscovered and the dignity we have restored. From a distance may be glimpsed the smiles of a people happy to greet you in the manner of "lavalas". From a distance may be heard the voice of the Haitian nation happy to be part of the United Nations, happy to be present at the United Nations.

(President Aristide)

As the echo of this multitude of Haitian voices resounds, I wish to extend to Mr. Shihabi my warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. His exceptional qualities and his vast experience in dealing with international problems have undoubtedly rekindled hope.

I should like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor, Mr. Guido De Marco, who conducted the proceedings of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session so wisely and with such competence.

I want also to pay a warm tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his courage and patience. His mandate, unfortunately, will expire in the next few months. Without the slightest doubt, he has, with skill and farsightedness, put into effect the prescriptions laid down for the international community in the Charter of the United Nations. To a very large extent, the United Nations is in his debt for the restoration of confidence that it is enjoying today. We shall long remember this representative of Latin American diplomacy.

(spoke in Spanish)

To my dear Latin American friends and companions I extend a fraternal greeting. As you know, we share the experience of struggle - struggle against the enslavement of man by man, struggle for the advent of an era of peace and the total liberation of the Latin American continent and the whole world.

With our comrades, friends, brothers and sisters we were united yesterday, and we are still united, for certainly, with democracy, victory will be ours. Together, we shall prevail.

(President Aristide)

(spoke in French)

The vibration of these linguistic chords encourages me to add just a few notes to this symphony of languages.

(spoke in English)

I am sure that anglophones are delighted to hear a Haitian voice saying hello. Here we are on the way to democracy, fighting against all kinds of injustice and exploitation. The world, of course, will be better. Let's go. Up with the poor. Up with Haiti and Haitians living in the United States of America, building solidarity for the kingdom of justice, respect and dignity. To arrive at this stage of life in the history of Haiti, friends and organizations within the international community provide great solidarity to the Haitian people. For that solidarity, we express our gratitude to all. For the solidarity, we shall remain grateful to the Organization that helped, and continues to help, Haitian people. For decades, Haitians have been refugees around the world. To the countries that have received us we say, "Thanks". To the countries that have mistreated us we say, "Look, brothers, we are Haitians, and we are proud to be Haitians. We love Haiti, and we are proud to love Haiti. We are citizens of the world, and we are proud to be citizens of the world." To those who have received us with respect and dignity we say once again, "Thanks".

(spoke in French)

Many of our African and Arab brothers, of course, speak English. But this does not mean that we cannot have recourse to the lingala language to greet all Africans.

(President Aristide)

(spoke in Lingala; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

I greet all Africans. Solidarity between Africa and Haiti. Let us renew the links with Africa and return to our roots of solidarity, hand in hand. I love Africa and invite Africans to come to Haiti.

(spoke in Swahili; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

I love Africa.

(spoke in French)

I wish also to have recourse to Arabic to speak to our Arab sisters and brothers.

(spoke in Arabic)

How are you doing? I am very happy. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Peace be among you.

(spoke in French)

For peace in the Middle East my heart opens to the Jews with these words of peace:

(spoke in Hebrew; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

Peace be with you. Blessed be God. I lived for three years in Israel and learned your language, and today I am happy to say to you on behalf of my people, "Peace to all of you". We now have the opportunity, together, to do many good things. However, we do not have the time today to mention them all. The time will come. Blessed be God.

(spoke in French)

How can we turn our eyes towards Germany and Italy without saying:

(spoke in German; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

Good afternoon. How are you? Together we are strong. We have many things to do, and of course we shall travel towards democracy.

(President Aristide)

(spoke in French)

Already I hear the voice of eloquent silence asking me "What about Italy?"

(spoke in Italian; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

Let there sound an Italian note. Here it is - better late than never. It would have been difficult for me to forget my friends, especially when I think that at this very time many of them are working for peace. We have said over and over again to everyone, and today we say again, that to speak of peace is to speak of the people. That is why we are happy to be among you.

(spoke in Creole; interpretation from French text furnished by the delegation)

Let representatives guess which language is now going to make its entry into the United Nations. Yes, it is Creole of course.

(President Aristide)

(spoke in French)

Yes, we are on our way, together with all peoples of all the United Nations, towards a better tomorrow.

Indeed, this decade has begun with events that can shape the future of mankind and of course give rise to hopes and questions. The forty-sixth session of the General Assembly crystallizes, in our view, a period of profound reflection for the international community. Unlike previous periods, this session is taking place at a time when profound upheavals are appreciably changing the geopolitical axes of our planet. The dialectic of a bipolar policy is prompting the international community to wonder who is to accede to the seat of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations? What about democracy at the global level?

We are talking about the future of the geopolitical axes, which should never be allowed to develop into totalitarian and absolute power.

At a time when the international community is concerned with changes in the geopolitical axes of the planet, let us turn to our dear Haiti, the rebellious, faithful daughter, a rebel against all imperialist dictates but faithful to all democratic prescriptions.

I should like to speak of ten milestones that line our way; we could call them the ten democratic commandments that arise from our democratic praxis. Our message will be confined to the democratic arena, where the ten democratic commands stand up in a straight line.

The first milestone, or the first democratic commandment, is liberty or death. As you know, Haiti was one of the first beacons of liberty in the Western Hemisphere. In 1791, we gave the world its first slave revolution,

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which enabled hundreds of thousands of blacks to throw off the yoke of repression. The leaders of this victorious revolution helped to finance the liberation crusade of Simon Bolivar in South America. It was in Haiti that slavery was first abolished, taking a giant stride towards human freedom. From the Haitian revolution grew the roots of the declaration of human rights. The Haiti of Boukmann, Dessalines and Toussaint Louverture was and remains the first black republic in the world.

Like a star of liberty, Haiti shines in the eyes of all. Throughout our history, often glorious, sometimes troubled, we have always recalled with pride the unprecedented exploits of our ancestors. The cries of liberty or death, liberty or death, far from being stifled in a sterile past, ring out continually in the heart of a people that has become, forever, a free nation.

All throughout our march towards 1991, in spite of our contribution to the free world, Haiti has not been able to open all the doors of the international community. The colonists of those days and their allies were afraid of freedom, as were our leaders and the traditional oligarchy. White colonists, black colonists - we had to throw off the yoke of black dictators and their international allies.

Happily, in 1986, to the surprise of the entire world, the Haitian people overthrew a dictatorial regime of 30 years' standing. This was the beginning of the end of a dictatorship which has left indelible scars. But the more we recall these scars, the louder we cry: liberty or death, liberty or death.

The second milestone, or democratic commandment, is democracy or death. After having thrown out the repressive, corrupt regime of the Duvaliers on 7 February 1986, the people of Charlemagne Peralte had only one choice: to establish, once and for all, a democratic regime in Haiti. Hence, liberty or

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death is equivalent to democracy or death. We therefore struggled relentlessly for the attainment of our rights against minority groups that held a monopoly on power after 1986. A relentless struggle and a legitimate one, since those in power did nothing to change the nature of the State, which for such a long time created conditions for maintaining the status quo and the functioning of the machinery of exploitation and repression.

Finally, on 16 December 1990, thanks to the valour of the Haitian people and thanks to your contribution, for the first time we held free, fair and democratic elections. Honour to the Haitian masses. Glory to our ancestors, who thwarted colonialism at the beginning of the 19th century. Hail to the international community and hail to the United Nations!

This is indeed an important first in history. For once, for the first time, a people with an ingenious tactical movement brought about a revolution by the ballot box. The election of the President of the Republic by a majority of more than 70 per cent on the first ballot symbolizes the victory of the people, the power of the people and the demands of the people.

These free, fair and democratic elections are ultimately the result of our own political strategy, that is to say, the historic upsurge of "lavalas". We fought in the manner of "lavalas", we won in the manner of "lavalas" and we are advancing in the manner of "lavalas".

In union there is strength, this is our motto. With the fork of division one cannot drink the soup of elections; with the fork of division, one cannot drink the soup of democracy.

In a way, the "lavalas" strategy is akin to the thoughts of the Pope, who, in his "Centesimus Annus" encyclical, suggested that events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were paving the way for the reaffirmation of the

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"positive character of an authentic theology of the total liberation of man". In Haiti, this theological approach cannot be confined to a simple analysis of reality; it is meant to be, rather, a method of thought and action in the school of the poor, a privileged site of the revelation of God, the historical subject of this struggle for the total liberation of man.

It is on the basis of the experience of the poor that we base the teachings of the democratic praxis, fuelled and illuminated, of course, by the theology of freedom. The dialectic to be established between the theology of freedom and the politics of freedom necessarily passes through the life and experiences of the poor.

(President Aristide)

When Jean-Paul Sartre criticized Hegel he noted that the latter had overlooked the fact that a void is devoid of something, and we liberation theologians can state that the void of poverty is an avid void, and not devoid of what is essential. Avid of liberation, its void entails a legitimate expectation whose essence dwells within the spirit of the poor. It lives by giving life to democracy. We, who are elected democratically, must be faithful to its rights.

I turn now to the third milestone of democracy: fidelity to human rights. If a man has duties, he certainly also has rights, rights to be respected and rights to respect, rights to guarantee that ultimately a State ruled by law will emerge.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is and must remain sacred. It is our heavy responsibility to observe the Constitution faithfully to guarantee our inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, in keeping with our Act of Independence of 1804 and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

There must be respect for the Constitution, in order to build a socially just, economically free and politically independent Haitian nation.

There must be respect for the Constitution in order to establish ideological pluralism and political diversity, to strengthen national unity, to eliminate the differences between towns and rural areas, to ensure the separation and the harmonious allocation of executive, judiciary and parliamentary powers; so as to establish a government based on fundamental freedoms and respect for human rights, a national dialogue, and the participation of the population as a whole in major decisions touching upon national life through an effective decentralization.

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The fourth milestone or fourth commandment of democracy is the right to eat and the right to work.

It goes without saying that the right to eat is an integral part of human rights. The existence of a person who is hungry because he is exploited indicts both the oppressor and the authorities who are responsible for enforcing respect for the inalienable and indefeasible right to life. In Haiti, victims of international exploitation have difficulty getting enough to eat because they themselves are being ground by the axes of international exploitation. In the arms race, the nations of the world are devoting to it more than $500 billion a year, or $1.4 billion every day. Only 15 days of such expenditure could eradicate hunger from the planet for many years.

The tragedy of hunger arises not out of lack of food but out of a lack of social justice. Work, more work, always work - this is what man needs if he is to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. It has been noted that if the amount being spent on building a B-1 bomber were to be spent on constructing dwellings, 70,000 jobs would be created.

How can we justify the fact that 71 per cent of Haitian farmers cultivate only a small square of land, less than 1.2 hectares? How can we justify the fact that 30 per cent of the wealthiest landowners in our country own more than two thirds of the arable land?

We must rise above the age-old indifference of the dominant political and economic sectors and demand respect for the right to food and the right to work. The hunger of one man is the hunger of all men. Everyone must work to achieve a labouring civilization in which the roots of hunger will be eradicated. The hunger of one man is the hunger of all men.

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We must go beyond verbiage and explore some of the factual pathways that have been traversed since 7 February 1991. On 7 February 1991 the "lavalas" government began to bring order to the administration. State resources have increased appreciably. In the last four months of the prior government, fiscal and customs revenues stood at a monthly average of 86.8 million gourdes, in contrast to an average of 122.9 million for the first four months of our "lavalas" government, with a clear upward trend - 137.6 million in the month of June. As for expenditures, in November 1990 the former government spent 164.7 million gourdes; in June 1991, the "lavalas" government spent only 86 million. Thus, for the first time in a long time, public funds showed a surplus of 41 million gourdes.

An increase in food production is a necessity. In order to achieve this, we are going to implement the agrarian reform set forth in article 248 of the Constitution and provide peasants with the wherewithal for production.

The participation of the private sector is essential for the creation of highly labour-intensive businesses. Whereas in the past illegal practices made it possible for some sectors to plunder the country to the detriment of the vast majority of the population, our "lavalas" government is ensuring respect for the rights of all: the right to invest in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution; the right to work for human and economic growth. To our dear friends and investors abroad, Haiti here and now extends a most cordial and heartfelt welcome.

The fifth milestone of the democratic commandment is the right to demand our due. In the past five years the Haitian people have made an outstanding and remarkable contribution to the democratic struggle that is being waged throughout the world. As the democratic tide surged in - in Eastern Europe,

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in Asia, in the Middle East, South Africa and Central and South America - we in Haiti witnessed an avalanche of democracy we have called "lavalas". No democratic nation can exist in isolation without geopolitical, diplomatic, economic and international ties.

Today, we see our right to demand our due as part of this network of relationships, in which we can on the one hand recognize the fruits of a rich but impoverished past and on the other discern the fruits of an exploited but hopeful present, thanks to the opportunity we now have to combine a colonized past with a democratic present.

Heraclitus of Ephesus rightly said: "Awakened men have but one world, but men asleep have each their own." Awakened men and women of Haiti, our world is a world of justice, justice for all, justice for us Haitians, who have all too often been the victims of social injustice.

If we scan the horizon of this world of justice, we wonder how long the impoverished will be forced to cry out, with Democritus: "We seek the good and do not find it; we find evil without seeking it."

In the belief that mens agitat molem - mind can move matter - our policy will continue to be attentive to the masses, who are calling for the respect and dignity due them. The same applies for the treatment inflicted upon so many of our Haitian brothers and sisters who live in foreign lands.

(President Aristide)

The sixth democratic milestone or commandment is: self-defence in the diaspora - the so-called tenth department. Hunted and harassed until 1991 by the blind brutality of the repressive machine, or by the structures of exploitation fashioned into an anti-democratic system, our Haitian sisters and brothers have not always experienced the joy of finding a promised land.

They were considered to be illegal because the torturers would not give their victims properly signed certificates of torture; they were considered to be illegal because they had to travel as boat people or without legal identity papers. But they made a large contribution to the economic prosperity of bosses who preferred malleable and freely exploitable human labour.

What can we say about our sisters and brothers imprisoned in Krome, and elsewhere? Is it not time, in the name of democracy, to study their cases and turn their suffering into rejoicing? With a view to encouraging the authorities concerned to take the appropriate steps to bring about this long-awaited rejoicing, we in the Haitian Government are constantly fighting against fraudulent practices and the procurement of false visas on Haitian territory.

As we address the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we are expressing ourselves in these terms for the sake of the well-being of our community. We feel bound to denounce and condemn before the whole of mankind the flagrant violation of the rights of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic. While we recognize the sovereignty of the Dominican Republic, we must firmly denounce and condemn this violation of human rights.

Haiti and the Dominican Republic are the two wings of a single bird, two nations which share the beautiful island of Hispaniola. Echoing the cries of

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all the victims whose rights are denied them, and in keeping with our commitment to respect human rights, despite the social problems and financial difficulties caused by this forced repatriation, we intend to show respect for both wings of the bird. This is attested to by the welcome that Haiti gives all those men and women who cross our border, be they Haitians or Dominicans. In solidarity with disadvantaged minorities, we call for reparation, as much for Dominican citizens by birth but of Haitian origin as for Haitian citizens who have fallen victim to this repatriation.

(spoke in Spanish)

It is not a matter of weeping when one realizes what is happening in the Dominican Republic; it is a matter of defending human rights, in the name of the Haitian people, in the name of all men who are really men and all women who are really women throughout the world. Therefore, we Haitians are working together with our Dominican brothers and sisters to be able to live in communion, with a continuing dialogue.

That is why, together with Dominican men and women who do not agree with this flouting of human rights, we Haitian men and women, we the entire Haitian people, declare to the world that we demand reparation.

We shall always walk side by side with the Dominican people as brothers and sisters, in order to live in peace, but a man worthy of the name can never bow his head when human rights are trampled upon as they now are in the case of Haitians born in the Dominican Republic or in Haiti, Haitians of Dominican origin, or Dominicans of Haitian origin. It is regrettable that the question of colour comes into play even when Dominicans are involved.

(President Aristide)

(spoke in French)

Arrested and expelled into Haitian territory, they generally have no homes, families or employment. Conservative estimates place the number of repatriated persons at more than 50,000 already. In the hope that the international agencies concerned will assist us to ensure respect for fundamental human rights, we here and now solemnly proclaim with pride and dignity that never again shall our Haitian sisters and brothers be sold so that their blood may be converted into bitter sugar. Blood in bitter sugar is unacceptable - and the unacceptable shall not be accepted.

(spoke in Spanish)

I hope that my Dominican brothers and sisters will always walk side by side with us in dialogue so that together we may protect the rights of all Dominicans and Haitians.

I say to my Dominican brothers, whom I love so much: let us go forward together to build a world of peace.

(spoke in French)

The seventh democratic milestone or commandment is: No to violence, yes to "lavalas". Is an unarmed political revolution possible in 1991? Yes. Incredible, but true. This is "lavalas" teaching: the tactical and strategic convergence of democratic forces brandishes the weapon of unity to combat that of violence. A stunning victory, a historic surprise!

In the schools of the poor, the teaching of active non-violence and of unity is triumphing over institutionalized violence. 1804 was the date of our first independence, but 1991 marks the beginning of the era of our second independence.

(President Aristide)

Is there any democratic nation that is capable of remaining indifferent to this victory of non-violence precisely where structures of economic violence still exist? Is it legitimate to try the patience of the victims of economic violence? There is no policy apart from relationships of strength, but there is also no economy apart from relationships of interest.

Because of the restoration of peace, the capital of non-violence that the Haitian masses have invested is yielding considerable economic interest. A simple psycho-social analysis is very eloquent. For the more social ego is attacked by oligarchical sclerosis, the healthier it becomes, psychologically, politically and economically. The teaching of non-violence should arouse a collective awareness of our land of non-violence. Ours is a land of non-violence, where 85 per cent of the population is still crushed by economic violence, is still illiterate - but is not stupid. Making these victims literate requires help from the true friends of Haiti - not simply friends, but true friends. You who are our true friends, work with us not as observers but as performers, as citizens of the world. We hope we can count on your cooperation in our literacy campaign. Any cooperation at this level attests to a determination to combat economic violence by active non-violence. Where the guns of violence sound, let the sun of non-violence shine in the "lavalas" spirit.

The eighth democratic milestone or commandment is: faithfulness to the human being - the ultimate wealth.

To speak of the human being as the ultimate wealth may perhaps suggest that one is disregarding gold, oil and dollars. Far from it. There is wealth and wealth. According to certain experts, if the hydro-electric potential of the United States were to be fully exploited, it could provide more energy than all the oil consumed in the world.

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All these riches should be placed at the service of mankind - the axis of the "lavalas" policy. We are ready to demonstrate our faithfulness to that approach by embracing anything that can promote the full development of the human being. Thus the harmonious links that we have already established with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are part of the framework of Caribbean solidarity, with a view to more effectively fostering human well-being.

We are also working to expand South-South relations, between us and our neighbours in Latin America. It goes without saying that South-South relationships are not the only important relationships for Haiti. For we share a political heritage with the United States, whose independence reminds us of the Haitian pioneers who fought and died precisely for the same independence. France, with which we also share a political heritage, the United States and other countries of North America, and the countries of Europe, of the Middle East, of Africa and of other parts of the world form a part, together with us, of the interdependent network of nations throughout the world.

We patriotically hail the Haitian men and women living in Cuba, and we also hail Cuba and the Cuban people, to whom we address our wishes for peace and democratic growth. We address the same good wishes for peace and democratic growth to the Middle East and South Africa.

In recent years the United Nations, under the guidance of Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has demonstrated that, given the means, it can be effective in settling conflicts. This is attested to by the cessation of hostilities between Iran and Iraq, the independence of Namibia and the dawning of a solution to the question of Western Sahara. Further proof of this is the way in which the United Nations, in accordance with its Charter, reacted when

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one of the States Members of the Organization fell victim to such cruel aggression on 2 August 1990 at the hands of Iraq. The manner in which the conflict was handled raised some legitimate reservations, but the role of the United Nations was never challenged. Nevertheless, the Gulf crisis has given rise to a number of still unanswered questions.

We all know that, in spite of the efforts of the United Nations, there are still parts of the world where divergent interests and lack of understanding between peoples continue to cause conflicts between States and within them. Despite the victories of the people of Azania over the juridical apparatus of the apartheid system, we are far from reaching the peak - that is, democracy.

Out of our sense of unity with the black people of Africa, who should enjoy all the rights recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we take this opportunity to appeal to the international community and, above all, the industrialized countries not to lift the comprehensive sanctions decreed against the Pretoria regime at this early stage. In its diametrical opposition to apartheid, the Republic of Haiti is struggling to ensure that the black majority of South Africa enjoys its rights to the full in a multiracial and democratic society. Bravo Mandela! Honour to Mandela!

If the memory of Mandela evokes such applause as I am hearing now, applause is surely due the memory of another truly great man - Martin Luther King.

The Haitian Government has noted with satisfaction the cease-fire recently arrived at between the parties in conflict in Western Sahara. We reaffirm our support for the process now under way.

(President Aristide)

The suffering of a single individual is the suffering of mankind. Our policy aims at providing, day after day, eloquent testimony to our faithfulness to man.

The ninth democratic milestone or commandment is: faithfulness to our culture.

The "lavalas" praxis intertwines cultural links at the very heart of the political universe. Resistance to cultural alienation guarantees the psychological health of the democratic fabric. For any cultural suicide leads to the devitalization of the social body and cannot but threaten the democratic cells of the body.

To live, and live to the full, is also to draw nourishment from the source of one's culture. To live to the full is to send one's roots deep down to the source of one's culture.

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This embraces the totality of the life of a people. What is involved here is a depth of being that must be delved and explored, and by this being we mean a fabric of relationships, pluri-dimensional relationships. Defining man not as an end but as a bridge, Friedrich Nietzsche places him - whether we like it or not - at the crossing point of the process of acculturation and inculturation. What is involved is a transmission of cultural seed which may give life to the being or wound it in its very essence.

The germs of pathologic culpability transmitted by contact between so-called dominant and dominated cultures can only be damaging to any democratic growth.

The "lavalas" praxis seeks to give our cultural identity its true value. Any in-depth change can be achieved democratically only if indigenous values are interweaved in a particular social-cultural tissue.

This faithfulness to the culture of mankind prompts us to share the concerns of the Kurdish people, the Palestinian people, the Jewish people, the peoples of Iraq - all cherishing the roots of their beings.

In this context of respect and peace, the Republic of Haiti warmly welcomes the accession of the two Koreas to the family of the United Nations.

Fidelity to our culture prompts us to sharpen our critical senses in order to protect our culture's health against certain evils such as illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs. The Haitian Government wishes to recall that effective work to combat the production of drugs also involves greater assistance to Latin American countries.

As far as drug trafficking itself is concerned, it is important to recall that it is generated and fuelled by the demand that comes from the North. Thus, at all cost, stimuli to production from the consumers of the

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industrialized countries must be eliminated. Concerted action between the States of the North and those of the South, with the assistance of the United Nations, would make it possible more effectively to combat this evil of drugs in its devastating effects on men and women.

The tenth - and last - landmark, or tenth democratic commandment: all around the table:

Yes, all around the democratic table.

Not a minority on the table

Nor a majority under the table

But all around the democratic table.

We are faced with an historic encounter as we approach 1992. It is an historic encounter on the eve of the 500th anniversary of the evangelization and of the struggle of the Haitian people to survive and to retain its dignity and identity. As we approach this 500th anniversary of resistance, both qualitative and quantitative, we can speak of a meeting around the table. This is in truth a real challenge facing us at the threshold of the third millenium.

Brothers and sisters of Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Cuba, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Martinique and so on, our past in the struggle against colonialism leads us inevitably to establish stronger and deeper links throughout our progress towards the Democratic Table.

A new social contract at the Caribbean, Latin American and international levels is necessary so that we may all one day meet around the Democratic Table.

Since 16 December 1990, the date of elections held under the lofty sponsorship of the United Nations, we in Haiti have been moving towards that meeting-place.

(President Aristide)

If we are all to get there, it is time that indebtedness cease to effect a net transfer of resources from our impoverished countries to the rich countries. In fact, between 1983 and 1988, the net transfer of resources to the so-called developed countries amounted to $115 billion. For one year alone, 1989, that transfer amounted to approximately $60 billion - financial resources the countries of the South desperately need for growth.

I hope that the Fourth Decade will yield positive results in the context of the new international order that is to be established.

At this close of the twentieth century, the Republic of Haiti renounces absolute power, embraces participative democracy and sings the hymn of liberty, pride and dignity - liberty won; pride regained; dignity reborn.

At this close of the twentieth century, the Republic of Haiti has the honour to hail the unity of nations: the United Nations for a united world; the United Nations through united peoples.

As for the Haitian people, we once again hail its heroic courage, crying out tirelessly and in the spirit of "lavalas":

It is better to perish with the people than to succeed without the people. But with the people there can be no defeat. So victory is ours.

In the same vein: we believe in Man; where a Man is exploited, call on us. To your call we will respond "yes", 77 times "yes". To exploitation we will answer "no", 77 times "no". To defend human rights, such is the mission of the United Nations. We believe in peace; where war rages, call on us. To your call, we will answer "yes", 77 times "yes". To war we will answer "no", 77 times "no". Guaranteeing peace, such is the mission of the United Nations.

(President Aristide)

We believe in the brotherhood of peoples. Wherever people turn away from each other, call on us. To your call we shall answer "yes", 77 times "yes". To rejection we shall answer "no", 77 times "no". To be a place for dialogue: that is the mission of the United Nations.

We believe in the Haitian people. Wherever they are struggling tirelessly in the "lavalas" spirit, we shall be; we shall always be there. It is better to perish with the people than to succeed without the people.

With the echo of this creed resounding in our ears, by way of conclusion let the echo of the democratic creed also resound. We believe in these ten democratic commandments. We believe in this democratic policy. We believe in that meeting where there will be no minority on the table and no majority under the table, but where everyone will be seated around the democratic table. So be it in the name of the people, of its sons and of its Holy Spirit. Amen.

United we are strong. United in the Caribbean we are a Power. United in the world we are a power for peace, justice, love and freedom.

Have we the right to speak here? If we have, let us say it together so that the echo can be heard in Haiti.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Haiti for the statement he has just made.

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, President of the Republic of Haiti, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The meeting was suspended at 4.35 p.m. and resumed at 4.40 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. JOSHI (Nepal): Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Shihabi of Saudi Arabia most warmly on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. I wish him every success in guiding our deliberations to a successful conclusion. May I also avail myself of this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to his predecessor, Foreign Minister Guido de Marco of Malta, for the excellent manner in which he presided over the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I should like also to pay a very warm tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar. The United Nations has benefited greatly from his wisdom and dedication.

The founders envisaged this Organization as a peaceful and universal family of nations. It is a great pleasure, therefore, to welcome the new Members in our midst - the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Lithuania. Their admission has moved us even closer to the goal of universal membership of the United Nations.

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

The year under review has been marked by events extraordinary in sweep and importance. The vision of the Charter - a vision of a world of tolerance, of equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small, a vision of social progress and better standards of life based on greater freedoms and the dignity and worth of the human person - is still far from becoming realized. But hopes have never been higher. A spontaneous wave of democracy, freedom and human rights is sweeping the world. A spirit of cooperation and mutual trust has replaced the atmosphere of confrontation that marred East-West relations for over forty years and rendered this Organization ineffective. During the past year the world community has made it abundantly clear that aggression will not be tolerated, will not succeed and will not pay. This commitment to collective action has brought about a renaissance of the United Nations.

These important developments have given hopes to millions of people around the world. Nepal is proud to be a part of the global movement towards pluralistic political systems. A little over a year ago the people of Nepal joined hands in a mass movement for the restoration of multi-party democracy. This restoration of democracy has brought the King and the people of Nepal together in the process of nation-building. We are convinced that democracy, pluralism and human rights are indispensable for economic development. Our new Constitution has vested sovereignty in the people. Constitutional monarchy, a multi-party political system, an independent judiciary and a guarantee of all human rights are its hallmarks. The vigour and enthusiasm of the Nepalese people for the right to choose their government were amply demonstrated in the general elections held in May this year - the first free elections in Nepal in over three decades. Our new Government has started the

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process of consolidating the institutions of a liberal democratic society as outlined in the Constitution. The Government is committed to ensuring a decent standard of life for all citizens and to creating a society where all our people can exercise their rights and freedom to the fullest extent. To help us reach these goals, we look forward to greater understanding and cooperation from friendly countries and multilateral institutions. We place great value on our warm and cooperative relations with the countries in our immediate neighbourhood. With our neighbours in South Asia, we have joined in a cooperative venture under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to lay the groundwork of a grand vision of common benefit and an enduring relationship of sincerity and trust among all members. We cherish our friendship with all countries of the world and are prepared to cooperate to work for peace and security. Our commitment to human rights is enshrined in our Constitution, and we are determined to make human rights an important cornerstone of our foreign policy.

As the Secretary-General has noted in his annual report on the work of the Organization, the world situation presents a unique juxtaposition of promises and perils. Dramatic events in Europe are the expression of the will of the people. The people's revolution has led to the dismantling of the iron curtain. It has enabled the three Baltic republics to take their rightful place among nations of the world. We welcome the move towards an integrated approach towards the solution of European problems. A dynamic Europe is vital for democracy and economic development world-wide. Nothing would be more unfortunate than for a united Europe to drift towards becoming fortress Europe. Paradoxically, the winds of change have also raised the spectre of nationalistic and ethnic strife. If allowed to fester, it contains seeds of

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

destabilization with far-reaching implications. These flashpoints can be contained only through a scrupulous adherence to the norms of human rights and the rights of minorities. The solutions demand statesmanship of the highest order.

Opportunities created by a new climate of international relations must be seized to resolve the Middle East crisis on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

A solution to the problem of Cambodia now seems within our grasp. We welcome the efforts of the Cambodian parties to implement the plan drawn up by the five permanent members of the Security Council for a comprehensive political settlement. We strongly support the role of the United Nations in the process.

We sincerely hope that the admission of the two Koreas into the United Nations will facilitate reunification through the peaceful efforts of the Korean people.

We welcome the important developments towards the complete dismantling of apartheid in South Africa. We appeal for an end to violence in that country, for violence can only jeopardize the goal of the eradication of apartheid. While supporting the determination of the majority population to bring lasting changes in South Africa through negotiations and peaceful means, we believe that the United Nations must continue to exert all possible efforts towards that end.

Without acknowledgement of the common interest in the survival of the human race, there can be no peaceful world. Without questioning the legitimate right to self-defence, we feel that the present obsession with military security is in fundamental contradiction of the avowed pursuit of a

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

new international order based on law and justice. Therefore the international community must press ahead with disarmament on a world-wide scale. A series of crises have dramatically illustrated the importance of preventing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Disarmament has to include all categories of weapons: nuclear, conventional and chemical. The progress in negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States gives us encouragement. Nepal welcomes the signing of the treaty on strategic arms reduction (START) and looks forward to a continuation of the process leading to deeper cuts in strategic arsenals. We welcome the decision of China and France to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a step which will greatly enhance the credibility of that vital cornerstone of nuclear disarmament. We reiterate our appeal for the early conclusion of a universal convention on the banning of chemical weapons.

Many of the hopes of peoples in developing countries focus on economic and social development. The world political situation today presents an opportunity to deal with the interrelated economic, financial, monetary and trade issues as parts of a wider political process. The continued deterioration in the economic situation of the majority of developing countries is in itself a threat to international peace and stability. It is detrimental to the consolidation of democracy and human rights. It has become imperative to act urgently in the spheres of debt, trade and commodities and human resources development. Continued difficulties in the international economic situation have hit the least developed countries the hardest. Unless urgent measures are taken, it will be difficult to reverse their growing marginalization in the world economy.

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

They need financial assistance and debt relief, combined with comprehensive plans for structural change. In this context, Nepal looks forward to full and expeditious implementation of the Programme of Action adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries.

Environment has become a major issue on the global agenda. The challenge is to find ways and means to enable developing countries to participate effectively in international environmental cooperation without sacrificing their development imperatives. It is clear that the hugely varied problems of our environment can be tackled only if the world acts together. The 1992 Rio Conference presents a unique opportunity to rise above empty generalities and to adopt environmentally sound development strategies based on the transfer of adequate resources and technologies.

It could take years to understand fully the implications of the changes we have been witnessing in recent years. At a time when the pace of events is outstripping our capacity to adjust, there is a consensus that the principles of the Charter should govern the history-in-making, thereby ensuring a smooth transition to a stable and democratic world order. The unanimity in the Security Council in the face of the crisis in the Persian Gulf is a matter of extraordinary consequence for the future. It has upheld the principle of unconditional compliance with the rule of law. It also marked the beginning of a new phase in the application of the authority of the Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

While we welcome the convergence of views among the five permanent members of the Security Council on a number of regional issues of grave importance, we wish to underline the critical importance of ensuring that such agreement is legitimized by wider support from the international community.

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

In the light of the volatility of the present situation, the appeal of the Secretary-General that a renewed emphasis be placed on preventive diplomacy is most timely. The successful United Nations operations in Namibia and Nicaragua, the ongoing missions in Angola and Central America, the United Nations plan for a referendum in Western Sahara, the planned operation in Cambodia and the prospects in Afghanistan have added new dimensions to the possibilities of the world Organization.

The fundamental importance of the peace-keeping operations has long been established, but an even more important aspect of United Nations involvement in peacemaking is rapidly emerging. Nepal remains a firm supporter of both the peace-keeping and the peacemaking activities of the United Nations. We believe that those must be based on a clear mandate and on the principles of cost-effectiveness, flexibility and efficiency. A sound financial basis is as important as the cooperation of the parties concerned. This requires a renewed commitment of all members to live up to their responsibility in carrying out a duly authorized peace-keeping and/or peacemaking operation.

As the vision of the Charter does not limit itself to the solution of political problems, the United Nations must play a role in the creation of a world where each individual has a right to a decent life. This involves a role in the search for global solutions to persistent widespread poverty, in the protection and preservation of the environment, in the fight against the scourge of terrorism and drug trafficking, and in the protection of human rights.

In the last analysis, the welfare of an individual human being is the ultimate reason for our common efforts to realize the ideals of the Charter. It is for the full realization of the rights and fundamental freedoms of each

(Mr. Joshi, Nepal)

individual human being that we are engaged in the search for a democratic international order. The end of the ideological divide has created a unique opportunity to make human rights the fulcrum around which our commitment should evolve.

To turn the tide in matters like these - matters of peace and survival in decency - is a major undertaking even for a regenerated United Nations. But we cannot fail to take advantage of the sweeping changes that are making possible a renaissance of the ideas enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Mrs. McDOUGALL (Canada): I know that you, Sir, will convey to the President of the General Assembly at the forty-sixth session my congratulations as I join those who have already congratulated him on his assumption of the duties of his important office. I know that he, as well as you and others, will bring wisdom and experience to bear, enabling you to build on the proud accomplishments of many distinguished predecessors.

The ranks of this Assembly have increased since last year's general debate. The United Nations family has now been enriched by the accession of seven new members: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Korea, South Korea, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia. To the representatives of these seven States I extend both a warm welcome and a pledge of Canada's continuing cooperation.

We meet this year at a time of great opportunity. The pace and direction of events of the past few months have, in general terms, augured well for a more secure and more equitable world order, and for the ultimate triumph of a world dedicated to the rule of law. But progress has presented challenges. One revolution after another has unleashed long-simmering ethnic rivalries.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

The changes shaking the Soviet Union have exposed the fault-lines of persistent economic and social tensions.

(spoke in French)

Civil strife in Yugoslavia threatens the new peace of Europe. And growing numbers of people flee their countries of origin in the wake of political disruption, natural disasters or relentless poverty.

The international community must adapt itself and progress from a world centred on the individual nation State to an interdependent world, from a world dominated by bilateral diplomacy to one in which multilateral institutions occupy a central place.

Our adaptation at this time of revolutionary change must be both national and international. Canada is now in the process of making this kind of essential adaptation, in the face of domestic challenges. This includes a fundamental questioning of our most basic internal political structures. The Government of Canada is unshakeable in its commitment to a prosperous and united Canada, and I am confident that Canadians will succeed in renewing our own Confederation through the spirit of flexibility, tolerance, compromise and optimism that have always been a feature of Canada's relationship with this Organization and of our many other international activities.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

(spoke in English)

We owe this commitment to our own people and also to a world searching for stability, security and leadership at a time of profound and sometimes wrenching change.

Adaptation must also come to the body of doctrine and law by which States have conducted their diplomacy for centuries. In Yugoslavia, where the forces of ethnic hatred have visited death and destruction upon hundreds of people, we must not allow the principle of non-intervention to impede an effective international response. The concept of sovereignty is fundamental to statehood, to international discourse and, of course, to the United Nations itself. The current conflict in Yugoslavia is, however, more than an internal affair. A collapse of effective governmental authority in Yugoslavia, if it continues, could escalate the degree of civil strife and endanger peace and security in neighbouring countries. Thus, the concept of sovereignty must respect higher principles, including the need to preserve human life from wanton destruction.

That is why Canada has asked the Security Council to consider the situation in Yugoslavia. On matters of peace and security, the Council speaks for all of us. Its actions carry the weight and authority of the entire world community. We believe that it can and should add that weight and authority to the efforts of the European Community and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe to bring about a peaceful, negotiated settlement.

Should it be decided that a United Nations peace-keeping operation would contribute to such a solution, I want to assure you that Canada is ready and willing to do its part, as we have done numerous times in the past when duty and obligation to the promotion of peace, security and stability are clear.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

Events within the Organization over the past year have been ground-breaking. Ordinary Canadians have been active players in these events, and we have participated with commitment and energy as the United Nations has lived up to its Charter mandate. Canadians supported United Nations action in the Persian Gulf. They supported our country's participation in the efforts to restore Kuwaiti sovereignty because they recognized that fundamental international principles were at stake. But they would not have supported these actions without the clear authority of the United Nations Security Council.

Now, those same Canadians want us to build an even more effective United Nations, one that is able to work for comprehensive security everywhere, based on the international rule of law. The need to build such an overriding security framework is a central lesson of the events of the past year.

I believe that we must look beyond a system that only inhibits armed confrontations. I believe that we need a new definition of the concept of multilateral security, a definition that takes into account the new and varied threats to global peace and security. These include the depletion of the ozone layer, the degradation of our seas, the debilitating scourge of illicit drugs, world-wide epidemics such as AIDS, mass exoduses of people from one country to another and the desperate poverty that persists in many parts of the world. We also recognize that our collective security depends upon democracy and respect for human rights.

The Gulf Crisis showed that the United Nations has the will and the capacity to repel military aggression. But can we meet these many new challenges? Challenges to economic and social development, to human rights and freedoms and to the environment?

For Canada, the single most important priority is to make the United

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Nations stronger, more effective and more relevant to the challenges of this decade. We can begin by taking a fresh look at both the United Nations Charter and the Security Council.

Few people, for example, realize that seven countries that have joined the United Nations and are serving it with distinction are still identified as "enemy states". We can and should find ways to remove this archaic stigma.

As for the Security Council itself, we, like others, are looking for effective leadership from the current five members, which today are working together in the kind of partnership envisaged in the Charter. Canada believes it is not too soon to start looking ahead to the day when key countries, representing all regions of the globe, are permanent members of the Security Council. In the meantime, our immediate priority is to ensure that the Security Council, in its present form, can function with vision, effectiveness and wisdom.

As a starting-point, we must strengthen the Council's capacity to take preventive or anticipatory actions. An ability to assess impending flash-points, engage the necessary political will at the earliest possible stage and take effective, decisive and timely action will increase the lead-time in reacting to events and reduce security risks by minimizing the element of surprise. Indeed, the very capacity of the United Nations system to provide early and effective warning may itself discourage recourse to conflict.

I believe we can accomplish this within the existing Charter as long as the Secretary-General can continue to play a strong leadership role. We can be proud - as can Javier Perez de Cuellar himself - that during his tenure there have been a number of remarkable accomplishments despite enormous constraints. In recognizing his achievements, we acknowledge that his office

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needs stronger support from us to ensure that his successor can continue to provide the same inspired leadership.

At another and very practical level, for the United Nations to be efficient, all Member States must respect their financial obligations. This means paying on time and in full. Given its enhanced role, it is unacceptable in the extreme that the United Nations should be paralysed by a lack of sufficient resources because assessments go unpaid.

Canada is committed to improving the United Nations ability to channel the military resources of Member States to peaceful purposes. This is essential both for humanitarian purposes and for promoting peace and security through peace-keeping, and through military enforcement when necessary. We look to increasing the capability of the Secretary-General to plan and conduct peace-keeping missions. We should also explore ways of turning these military resources to humanitarian relief purposes.

We also need to look more closely at regional security. We are very much aware, all of us, that the Security Council's ability to deter aggressive action cannot by itself provide global security. In addition, we need effective regional security arrangements on a cooperative basis, arrangements that can address some of the underlying causes of insecurity and instability.

The new global climate for cooperation has created opportunities for regions to address their own problems without being used as dominoes in some wider ideological game. It has also created obligations for regions to do so. This approach is crucial for long-lasting peace and security in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe and the Asia-Pacific. It has been essential for the progress towards peace in Cambodia and the solution of other regional conflicts.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

In the Middle East, problems remain, but we believe that solutions to these difficult problems are now a little closer. Canada will continue to support such constructive initiatives as the current efforts of the United States based on the principles enshrined in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We call for direct negotiation between the parties concerned as the only route to a just and lasting peace. We continue to hope that a peace conference can open the door to those negotiations.

In the meantime, all countries can make particular efforts in the coming session to demonstrate our sensitivity to the parties directly involved. Within our own purview, a decision by this session of the General Assembly to rescind the infamous "Zionism is racism" resolution would send a powerful and positive signal, and Canada would support a move to do so.

Renewed efforts to design a comprehensive and effective framework for dealing with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are also absolutely essential. The Gulf conflict showed that conventional arms, as well as weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, can destabilize entire regions. Since 1950, shortly after the Organization was founded, the world has suffered 125 wars. Those wars have killed 25 million people, almost all as a result of conventional, ordinary weapons. How many more conflicts, how many more deaths, how many more destitute refugees does the international community need before we apply the necessary political commitment we all must show to eliminate these threats?

Canada was among the first nations to call for definitive action. In February our Prime Minister, Brian Mulroney, characterized as insane the build-up of weapons that had taken place in Iraq, and we are still seeing that insanity today. At that time, the Prime Minister launched an initiative that

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called for a number of concrete steps: first, universal adherence to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and its indefinite extension beyond 1995; secondly, immediate conclusion of a global, comprehensive and verifiable convention banning the acquisition, possession and use of chemical weapons; thirdly, strengthening of the biological and toxin weapons convention; and, fourthly, transparency of international arms sales, particularly by the establishment of a United Nations register.

We are, with others, moving ahead with proposals to address the areas of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. With respect to conventional weapons, transparency is vital, not only for knowing what is going on in the arms trade but also for building confidence and trust. A global arms-transfer register that is universal, non-discriminatory and effective is long overdue. That register should also include existing national inventories, and we must be prepared to act on the basis of that information.

We applaud the historic advances made over the past year in East-West arms control. We urge all parties to ratify and implement the Treaty on conventional forces in Europe and the START Treaty as soon as possible and then to begin anew to reduce unnecessarily large arsenals further.

Let me point out that in calling for this we are not naive. Every country has a legitimate right to assess its own defence needs and every country has the right to act accordingly. But no country, under guise of defence, has the right to accumulate arms that are intended to destroy its neighbours. Equally troubling are excessive expenditures on arms that sacrifice such other important priorities as health, education and agriculture. The choice is there for all of us to make. The old saying is "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares" - instruments of destruction or tools for peace.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

(spoke in French)

I should also like to say a few words about the effectiveness of humanitarian relief. Assistance to victims of natural, economic and political disasters has always been a priority of the United Nations. Yet we are well aware that the United Nations response to these crises has lost its edge, dulled by quarrels among agencies and jealous hoarding of admittedly scant resources. In the face of the human tragedy involved, these practices are inexcusable and intolerable. Hence, it is time for the appointment of a senior official for humanitarian relief and disaster assistance who can organize prompt international responses to disaster with dispatch and compassion.

Reinvigorating the effectiveness of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization and creating stronger links between New York and Geneva can provide inter-agency responses that are needed, coherent and focused responses. We support the establishment of a new United Nations fund to provide flexibility for humanitarian relief at the onset of a disaster.

With respect to developing countries, despite the fiscal constraints that are affecting virtually all countries in the world, Canada believes that a strengthened and more effective United Nations must continue its focus on helping the poorest among us.

Developing countries are making major efforts to reform their political and economic systems. Unhappily, in many countries, especially those in Africa, as dramatically confirmed in the Secretary General's report on the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, debt-service obligations continue to exceed by far the capacity to pay. That challenge has been severely compounded by drought,

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desertification, environmental degradation and disease, and by the migration of desperate people fleeing these perils.

What are the answers? While they may be complex, they are not new. The common goal of sustainable development depends upon participatory democracy, upon open, market-based economic policies, upon sound economic management and upon an orderly international trading system, which we are trying to ensure in the Uruguay Round of the multilateral trade negotiations. With ideological blocs now dissolving, we must not invent new economic blocs to divide us once again.

(spoke in English)

Over the past year we have seen remarkable progress in the area of human rights - one of Canada's favourite topics. For example, South Africa has taken important steps towards dismantling apartheid and constructing a non-racial democracy. Much, however, as we all know, remains to be done. The 1993 World Conference should become a focal point for enhancing international efforts to promote a universal culture of human rights. As we approach that Conference, we must ask how the United Nations Centre for Human Rights in Geneva can become a more vigorous and more vocal watch-dog for human rights. Given the priority we attach to human rights as one of the three primary objectives of the Charter, we must build the institutional capabilities of the United Nations system so that it can perform its functions effectively. The discrepancy between our goals in the human rights field and the modest means at the disposal of the Secretary-General is becoming increasingly anomalous.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

Events of recent months have also focused increased and deserved attention on democratic institutions. We all applaud those countries that have held free and fair elections in the past year - many for the first time. But democracy is more than an electoral process; it is a way of thinking, and it must become a part of our being. It requires institutional support, including a free press and the vigilant protection of an independent judiciary. At this session of the General Assembly, we intend to pursue a resolution on the independence of the judiciary.

The United Nations must also intensify its work to achieve equality for women. Although the United Nations has taken some important steps to promote gender equality since the proclamation of the International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women, the majority of the world's women still lag far behind men in power, wealth and opportunity, and they still do much of the work.

By its own actions and in its own operations, the leadership of the Organization must provide leadership on all issues of women's equality. A long overdue step would be to ensure the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat by appointing more women to senior positions.

Greater energy and vigour must be brought to bear in the implementation of forward-looking strategies for the advancement of women, including programmes designed to advance literacy. Efforts to ensure that women participate fully and have a voice in the development process must be pursued and pushed hard. Beyond considerations of social justice and equity, which is at the foundation of our belief in this issue, it is time that we realized that no nation can be fully developed until all of its citizens are given not only the opportunity but also the ability to contribute their talents, their intelligence and their energy to that goal.

(Mrs. McDougall, Canada)

A key human rights challenge as well is to improve the lives of the world's children. This includes not only full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child but also the ambitious goals of the Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the World Summit for Children and submitted at last year's session of the General Assembly by Prime Minister Mulroney.

I want to express Canada's pleasure at the follow-up that is taking place under the aegis of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). As for our own follow-up, we have taken several initiatives in order to increase awareness about children's issues and to encourage cooperation across Canada.

Let me talk a little bit also about the environment. In just eight months world leaders will gather in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). What a great opportunity to launch a concerted shift to more sustainable forms of development, to integrate environmental concerns into economic development. It is an opportunity to infuse our efforts to protect the international environment with the political will required to do so. It is an opportunity to forge an international consensus that will prevent fracturing our efforts into an unbridgeable divide between developed and underdeveloped countries.

The Rio conference is not an optional occasion. It is approaching, and we should recognize now, well in advance of our deliberations, that the price of failure will be high indeed.

From our perspective, a good package at Rio would consist of four elements: the Earth Charter, dealing with principles; Agenda 21, setting out actions; Conventions on Climate Change and Biodiversity; and a Statement of Principles on Forests. For this package to succeed, we will have to ensure

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that political commitments are made for the necessary resources, the transfer of technology and the adaptation of institutions.

But we are worried. Now that three of the four preparatory meetings have been held, the results can be assessed. I fear that we have not overcome the two great risks that UNCED faces: disinterest on the part of the Governments of many developed countries and a slide towards two solitudes of rich and poor.

It is true that we in Canada are worried about climate change. We are worried about the loss of species, about pollutants in the Arctic food chain, ocean resources and forests. But we, as a developed country, recognize that for developing countries eliminating poverty, ensuring nutrition and eradicating disease are top priorities and are inextricably linked to the environment. So we recognize that we cannot find solutions to one set of problems without acting on the other.

Environment and development must become a joint preoccupation. We know that developing countries need assistance to implement sustainable development. UNCED, if it does nothing else, must address that issue head on. It must come to grips with the key cross-sectoral issues, namely, human settlements, poverty and sustainability, financial resources, technology transfer, and the international economic environment, including questions of terms of trade and debt.

An important distinction between UNCED and other major conferences - and it is a positive one - is the vital role played by the many sectors outside of government which will be participating. Youth, women, indigenous people, business, industry, labour, the world's cities, both environmental and developmental non-governmental organizations, universities, colleges, scientific associations with competence and relevance have been actively

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participating in the UNCED process. These sectors will be present at UNCED to undertake parallel activities focusing on their contributions to the implementation of sustainable development. They will be writing their own chapters on Agenda 21. And the Conference should be structured to facilitate their special and important contributions.

There are simply no viable alternatives to practical, future-oriented results at this Conference.

As we begin the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, we must constantly remind ourselves that we are not here to represent blocs, nor to promote ideologies. We are here to represent people. "We the peoples of the United Nations" are the words taken from the Charter. Never have these words meant more or held more promise than today. But words cannot turn famine into bounty, discrimination into equality, repression into freedom, or brutality into compassion. They will mean little if we fail to give ourselves the tools for effective action or if we succumb to the temptation of unilateralism.

Canada is determined not only to honour those words but also to ensure that the Organization, which we have long supported in the ideals that it represents, has the means to put them into practice. Canadians want to live on a planet that is peaceful, prosperous and just. We have it here in the Assembly in our power to build such a world. We build it nation by nation, individual by individual, and collectively here together.

We are encouraged by recent events and the role that the United Nations has played in those events.

Let us, as the United Nations, move from strength to strength for all the peoples of the world.

Mr. NASTASE (Romania): I wish first of all to convey to Mr. Samir Shihabi my congratulations on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at this most important session.

Except for those concerning 1960, one can hardly find in the records of the United Nations an event of the kind we witnessed last week; namely, the simultaneous admission to membership of seven additional States. It confirms without doubt the universal vocation of our Organization or, more precisely, that singular openness which enables the United Nations to be in tune with what is going on in the world. Assessing the significance of such an event, we should stress equally that, by seeking recognition as Members of the United Nations, the recently admitted States, like others that are still waiting for recognition, offer the most convincing proof that the United Nations is increasingly perceived as a privileged framework for the achievement of a peaceful and democratic world order.

Such encouraging evidence that the United Nations, in regard to its role in world affairs, has not lost the functions entrusted to it in the aftermath of the Second World War should serve as a catalyst for our common endeavour to improve its efficiency.

Before elaborating on this, I should like to extend to the representatives of the Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and our fellow European countries - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - as well as to the representatives of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands our greetings on their admission as full members of the United Nations family. At the same time, I should like to share with all the representatives gathered in this Hall our hope that in the near future the newly independent States which have asked, or are going to ask, to be allowed to join the world Organization will also enjoy the right to be among us.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The fact that some of the new Members have only recently won their independence and international recognition, on the one hand, and the fact that we have agreed to accept two States representing one and the same nation, on the other, encourages us to believe that in a reasonable span of time the Republic of Moldova will, in its turn, benefit from legitimate recognition as a Member of the United Nations.

We are strengthened in our belief by the evidence that double standards are on the wane in our Organization. Today, when the divisions of the cold war have started to be replaced by a growing endeavour to bring about a new world order, it is only natural that such double standards should not be allowed to become manifest in connection with admission to the United Nations - the more so because abandoning double standards is not only a high priority but also a tangible possibility.

The Gulf crisis clearly demonstrated that the United Nations is no longer the prisoner of the ideological confrontation that resulted in too many of its resolutions, even some of those adopted by the Security Council, failing to be implemented during the last four decades.

Since the end of 1989 the world and, together with it, the United Nations have entered a new phase in their history. The conceptual field itself suggests that times are changing. Notions directly or indirectly connected to the cold-war Manichean language are already well behind us. Some others - such as neutrality and non-alignment - seem to need new definitions. New notions - and the concept of a new world order is the best example - have become part of our daily political language.

It goes without saying, therefore, that the new climate does not offer solutions to the many problems the world of the 1990s is confronted with.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

None the less, it has created a more favourable international political environment for cooperation and understanding. The challenge before us is to bring about, in each and every field of human activity, proper conditions for improvement of the human condition all over the world.

I feel the need to recall for representatives at this session of the General Assembly how strongly attached to the cause of peace and civilization my country has been throughout its tortuous history. Its Latin identity, its Christian religion and its vocation for tolerance - a sine qua non of democracy - have been the mainspring of its unabated attachment to those supreme ends of human endeavour.

Situated, by the will of God, at the crossroads not only of great cultures but also of great empires, the Romanians are inheritors of the ancient Dacia, of Rome and of Byzantium. It has never been their fault that their land has on more than one occasion been a theatre of war. All too often neighbouring empires decided the destiny of the Romanians, arbitrarily modified the borders of their territories and influenced or brutally interfered with their internal development.

Almost 2000 years have elapsed since the famous Roman Emperor Trajan commissioned one of the greatest architects of the time, Apollodor of Damascus, to build the biggest bridge across the Danube so that his legions could enter Dacia Felix. It was the same Apollodor of Damascus who a few years later was to raise the Trajan Column in Rome, a monument that historians regard as the birth certificate of the Romanian people. As my illustrious predecessor, the leading diplomat of the period between the two world wars in Europe, the Foreign Minister of Romania, Nicolae Titulescu, used to recall, the cradle of the Romanian people is Transylvania. This people has lived and

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developed harmoniously and united within ethnically and historically defined borders. European by birth and mindful of their links with the family of Latin countries through their language, origin and culture, the Romanians aspire, by destiny and vocation, to their rightful place in the community of nations.

Freedom of eternal Romania in its natural borders is their driving force. Less than two years ago, after a long night of dictatorships, the Romanian people regained, through their own sacrifices, their right to free and democratic development. The huge price they were forced to pay for their freedom has made them determined resolutely to protect and exercise their irreversible option for democracy, dignity and legality.

Romania embarked upon her post-Communist history only about 20 months ago. The starting point was a stage of isolation and ideological and political dogmatism that had been unknown anywhere else in Europe.

We have already set up the new legislative and institutional framework required for the transition to a market economy. Private property has been recognized and guaranteed both in industry and in agriculture. Through appropriate legislation, economic and financial market mechanisms and the privatization of land, industry, trade and tourism have been set in motion.

None the less, our economic and financial situation is still in an alarming state. The new mechanisms are not yet functioning with the expected results. There is still resistance, reluctance and distrust about embarking upon comprehensive reform. Our Government is aware of the great risks and difficulties of the transition period. Inevitably its economic and social costs are high, as recognized by the international community. We shall have to pay them since, in this respect, there are no miraculous formulas that guarantee success.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The Government is endeavouring to maintain social stability in a dynamic environment imposed by reform. We are bound to succeed, but without substantial external support it will probably take us a long time. The assistance we have received from international financial institutions and from several developed countries has had a significant impact, but much more is needed for a modernized and restructured economy to take off. In this respect I would point out that Romania is a net creditor, since it has not contracted long-term loans. Payment of foreign debts due Romania, in particular by Iraq, is badly needed. We count on the understanding and support of the United Nations in recovering our outstanding loans.

We count especially on the support and solidarity of the European Economic Community (EEC) for a successful transition in our country. Our efforts to reinstate a market economy in Romania and to stimulate the free initiative drive of individuals would find a most happy catalyst in the EEC's decision to include Romania among its associate partners and, later on, among its members.

We are aware that it is not easy to qualify for such a position, but we are sure that, once such a possibility is clearly stated, the individual energies of Romanians would be fueled and viable solutions to the myriad problems at present facing our country will be implemented because, after all, hope is a most important prerequisite for success.

Taking into account the fact that the United Nations system is not an end in itself but a means aimed at protecting and promoting human dignity on an international scale, consideration of new and more efficient ways of achieving its goals should be of the greatest concern to us all.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The main features of the emerging new structure of international relations in no way contradict the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. On the contrary, they are in line with the basic concepts of the Charter: security based on law; cooperation in ensuring a decent life for all peoples; and democracy as a framework to guarantee fundamental rights and freedoms for all human beings, irrespective of colour, sex, ethnic origin or faith.

It is therefore our common responsibility to build upon these positive developments and give them an irreversible and universal character. The United Nations is unique equipped to carry out the historic task of building a new world order based on human and democratic values, thriving market economies and peaceful international relations.

In our view, in order to maintain and consolidate international peace and security, action is required in several directions.

It is of fundamental importance in the first place to encourage and intensify efforts to settle existing conflicts which have so severely damaged the real interests of all parties involved and international relations as a whole. In particular, we should aim at preventing a possible multiplication of chronic conflicts. Unfortunately, Europe - or, more exactly, its eastern part - seems in recent months to have become a theatre of dangerous evolutions of this kind.

To our deepest regret, neighbourly and friendly Yugoslavia is severely affected by the consequences of a virulent and destructive conflict whose main lesson is that the use of force leads nowhere but to further complication of existing problems. We welcome and support the actions of the EEC aimed at encouraging a political settlement of the Yugoslav crisis. We in Romania are

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of the opinion that the countries bordering Yugoslavia have a great responsibility to act in such a way as to prevent the aggravation of the conflict and even to facilitate a solution at the negotiation table. We also are of the view that this solution will be viable to the extent that it comes from within Yugoslavia. Its neighbours, the European countries and the United Nations have to do everything in their power to help the parties involved come to an agreement. Imposed solutions cannot last. It is the only wise course, consonant with both the interests of all the Yugoslav peoples and the objectives and common interests of the whole of Europe - and no less with those of the world at large.

The latest discussions and diplomatic consultations on the Yugoslav crisis have revealed certain approaches and ideas that should be addressed. It is difficult to base a new world order on the sovereignty of some but not all States. In the settlement of disputes, a free choice of means is the basic element of the Charter's philosophy. We should learn from the wisdom of past generations which, for instance, in dozens of treaties on the peaceful settlement of disputes expressly excluded from the arbitration procedure territorial and border problems. Do we want to abandon for Europe the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act concerning changes of borders? If we do, it would open up a Pandora's box.

As elsewhere in the world, the task before Europe is to step forward into the twenty-first century and not look back to the nineteenth century. One should never forget that the insane ambitions and aims of the totalitarian experiments that took place during the twentieth century on the soil of Europe did not in substance differ from the ambitions and aims of the "classical" empires. The only novelty that the Nazi and communist nightmares brought

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about was the aggressive use of their respective ideologies as a means to reach their oppressive ends. Therefore, while welcoming the crumbling of the last European empire, namely, the communist empire, every effort should be made to resist emerging political dreams of recreating in new forms old empires no less hostile to the peoples' rights to self-determination, sovereignty and independence.

Placed between two zones with a high potential for conflict, Romania is determined to do all in its power to remain a stable "bridge of hope" in Eastern Europe. It is in its national interest not only to stop at its borders the turmoil affecting two of its neighbours but also to contribute to the stability and security of the whole continent.

Deeply aware of its responsibility and willing to assume it, the Romanian Government has engaged over these last weeks in intensive diplomatic activity. Our open and constructive dialogue with almost every party involved in or affected by the Yugoslav crisis - representatives of the central Government of Yugoslavia and representatives of Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia - and successive exchanges of views with Albania, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey have been part of our efforts to promote a peaceful solution to the crisis affecting our common neighbour. There is hope. We should therefore explore the possibility of any efforts complementary to those already being carried on by the EEC and those that the United Nations could take upon itself, if our Organization deems it necessary to examine that specific crisis and make its own recommendations for its political solution.

As for the issues that have become "traditional" on the United Nations agenda, Romania welcomes efforts towards peace in the Middle East. We welcome also the progress being made towards the settlement of the situations in Cambodia, Afghanistan, Cyprus, the Western Sahara and Central America.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

While pursuing the earliest possible conclusion of all existing conflicts, it is critically important to develop and strengthen United Nations procedures and mechanisms for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States. As in medicine, it is easier to prevent than to cure. As emphasized again by the Secretary-General in his annual report, preventive diplomacy must acquire increased vigour. The Security Council, the General Assembly and the Secretary-General have considerably broader roles to play in this regard in the coming months and years. The adoption at this session of the declaration on fact-finding will provide material support for early action on the part of the United Nations to prevent armed conflicts and help bring about the pacific settlement of disputes.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The United Nations peace-keeping operations play an indispensable role in the settlement of conflicts. They can be further strengthened, both in terms of functioning and effectiveness. We are ready to participate in such operations and, to this end, a number of Romanian personnel are undergoing special training.

It is being understood more and more that international order can be peaceful and lasting to the extent that it is based on democracy and on full respect for the rights and freedoms of the individual. The Romanian Government is genuinely committed to the promotion of human rights and democratic values. This fact will be fully reflected in the country's new constitution, which is to be concluded and promulgated a few weeks from now, and which will be tested in the forthcoming local elections, as well as in the general elections to be held next spring.

We are of course aware that we are only at the beginning of our return to the democratic traditions of our country. In fact we are returning to normalcy, since, for us, communism meant abnormalcy and an anachronism. Our new democratic institutions are still fragile. We are counting on international cooperation with a view to strengthening them.

Earlier this month, at the Moscow meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe on the human dimension, our Government reiterated its determination fully to apply the European and the United Nations standards of democracy, human rights and the rule of law at home, and to contribute to their implementation abroad. We are looking forward to full membership for Romania in the Council of Europe and to its active participation in the human rights, social and cultural activities of this Organization.

In the same spirit we attach the utmost importance to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, which we see as another stepping-stone in the

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process of strengthening the fibre of peace, democracy, law and justice in all corners of our planet.

In our opinion, that Conference offers us a good opportunity to assess not only each country's performance in the field of human rights, but also jointly to assess the improvements that might be necessary as far as the United Nations instruments and mechanisms are concerned.

In this regard we would venture to suggest a possible subject for reflection. Taking into account the fact that regional experiences - and I have in mind especially the American and European ones - have proved that civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights constitute an integral whole and, on the other hand, that the two United Nations Covenants on Human Rights were adopted at a time when ideological divisions were dictating the tone within the United Nations, we could ask ourselves whether such a splitting is still justified and, in general, whether these instruments should not be updated in the light of the significant changes brought about by the end of the cold war era. A new look should also be taken at other United Nations instruments and resolutions tainted with ideological or political motives, including the well-known 1975 General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

The 1993 World Conference should also represent an important occasion for putting a final stop to tendencies to politicize minority issues, by taking them out of their natural framework, the framework of human rights: a framework which offers the best and the only viable answers to concerns about guaranteeing and respecting the legitimate rights of persons belonging to minorities and the protection of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of minorities.

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A peaceful and democratic world order requires universal and unabated compliance by all with the rule of law. And there is no organization better qualified to strengthen and develop international law than the United Nations. This is obviously the main purpose of the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of International Law, and Romania is fully committed to the attainment of its objectives.

The tasks ahead are not simple. To move from the concepts and mentalities of confrontation to those of cooperation and concord among all countries requires determination and great political vision. But that road must be travelled together, since that is the only way to avoid disaster and ensure a brighter future for all.

Human solidarity is the best means of advancing democracy throughout the world and of resisting any infringement of internationally accepted and consecrated rules of conduct. All of us were reminded of this by the coup in the USSR. One of the main explanations for its failure can be found in the determined and explicit international solidarity with, and support for, the democratic forces in the USSR.

The United Nations has a major role to play in consolidating the present historic trends. For this, increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations activities and mechanisms is essential. Therefore we welcome the various proposals with a view to making the Organization more effective and we intend to make a positive contribution to the achievement of early and substantive agreement on them.

Both memory and imagination should be our advisers in turning a new page of world history. Otherwise we would go towards a "future past world", rather than towards a safer, more peaceful, prosperous and democratic world.

Mr. ELLEMANN-JENSEN (Denmark): We are today in the happy position of being able to give a warm welcome to the representatives of the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. It is a particular pleasure for Denmark to welcome our neighbours on the Baltic Sea back to the international community as free and independent States. With the fully restored independence of the Baltic States, one of the last remaining issues arising from the Second World War has finally been settled. The membership of the Baltic States is a natural continuation of their membership of the League of Nations.

I am also very happy to welcome the new Member States of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as well as the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

The second term of office of the Secretary-General is drawing to a close. Throughout the past decade Mr. Perez de Cuellar has been untiring in his efforts to find solutions to many of the problems facing various areas of the world and the Organization itself. He can rightfully be gratified that, at long last, many of his efforts are bearing fruit. The United Nations of today is stronger and more respected than when he assumed office 10 years ago.

I recall with warm feelings the atmosphere in this forum one year ago. We had then experienced a year full of dramatic and historic changes sweeping through the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. We had witnessed the fall, one by one, of outdated totalitarian regimes and the resurrection of democracy and respect for human rights. These developments inspired a new optimism with regard to our future in general and to the future of this Organization in particular.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Today we can look back on yet another year of dramatic developments in the Soviet Union and in Central and Eastern Europe. Fortunately, the positive trend has continued.*

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* Mr. Ghezal (Tunisia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

However, in August we lived through "three days that shook the world". The putsch in Moscow sparked off a global shock. As in a nightmare, we imagined the return to totalitarianism and the cold war. All the more heartening was the awakening to the rejection of this development by the force of a people that will no longer accept oppression.

Those of us in Western Europe who after the Second World War had the opportunity to develop our democracies in freedom have now a special obligation to support the new democracies in their struggle to establish a solid foundation for their freedom. This we cannot do merely by declarations. We must provide economic support and we must open our own markets. We now have a unique opportunity to create a Europe whole and free - an opportunity we must not allow to slip through our hands because of narrow-minded national selfishness threatening to turn back the clock.

Let me add that today the Danish Government is proposing to our Parliament a plan of action covering the next few years, outlining our bilateral support for reforms in Eastern Europe, as well as our contributions to the multinational efforts, first of all through the Group of 24.

The new foundations for East-West relations have opened new and promising perspectives for the role of the United Nations. We come to this year's General Assembly session more confident that a genuine willingness has emerged to use the Organization as an effective instrument to resolve and prevent conflicts among nations. We come with visible proof that, when the world community is resolved to work together for peace, those who challenge the peace cannot win. The Iraqi assault on Kuwait led to hitherto unexperienced constructive cooperation in the Security Council and a collective military effort which made it clear that the world will no longer tolerate such

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flagrant military aggressions. For the first time in its history the United Nations system has been able to exploit to the full its potential for prevention of war and use of collective sanctions provided for in the Charter. The United Nations system has thus been allowed to play a far more active role in conflict prevention and peace-keeping. This is very encouraging for the future role of the United Nations and the establishment of a new world order.

However, in welcoming this development we must remind ourselves that the strengthened role of the United Nations in resolving conflicts among nations is first and foremost a result of the rapid change in East-West relations. It means that at the present stage the United Nations is as strong as the strength and durability of the new international political climate. We must therefore seize the present favourable opportunity - while we have it - to make the Organization more effective, by implementing much-needed reforms and devising mechanisms which can make the Organization more solid, should a less favourable climate return. Therefore the reform and strengthening of the United Nations - the whole United Nations system - should be a central issue at this year's General Assembly session.

In the political area, the Gulf war and later developments have made it clear that there is a real need for strengthening the ability of the United Nations to act rapidly and efficiently in crisis situations. We must strengthen already existing mechanisms. Thus, the Security Council must work closely together with the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General should play a more active role in preventing conflicts and in resolving emerging crises. Furthermore, the Security Council should have stronger instruments at its disposal with regard to peace enforcement. We must consider the

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effectiveness of various types of sanctions; and we must clarify how miltary forces can be employed and especially the role of the Security Council in carrying out military action.

Denmark has always been a firm supporter of United Nations peace-keeping operations. There certainly is a basis for increasing their role, especially in conflict prevention. A prerequisite will be a satisfactory solution with regard to the financing of the peace-keeping operations. In this respect, we strongly support the Secretary-General's proposal to increase the Working Capital Fund. We also suggest the establishment of a separate peace-keeping fund to ensure quick action when new peace-keeping operations are launched. Such a fund must be based on the collective responsibility of all Member States - that is, on assessed contributions.

The Gulf conflict and the associated revelations of Iraq's enormous arsenals have led to a revival of interest in international measures to control the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and to encourage greater responsibility in the transfer of conventional arms. The world community will increasingly have to tackle excessive build-ups of arms which might threaten global and regional security. Denmark will therefore, together with our European Community partners, submit an initiative on international arms transfers during this General Assembly session.

Lasting peace can be achieved only if we tackle the growing disparities between rich and poor nations, and between rich and poor people within nations. For years we have had lengthy and unproductive debates on who is responsible for the lack of progress in developing countries. It is therefore encouraging that these debates have recently been replaced by a much more constructive dialogue, which underlines our shared responsibility. Of special

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importance is the growing recognition that development of democratic systems, good governance and respect for human rights are essential for ensuring sustainable development. We welcome the reforms which many countries have initiated in the economic and social areas, although they do not yet go far enough; and we are pleased that democracy and pluralism are spreading to parts of the world hitherto characterized by one-party regimes and dictatorships.

However, the formal establishment of institutional structures and procedures will not suffice. The political and economic decision-making process must be based on broad public participation and in particular the active participation of women and young people. Through our own experience in Denmark we have certainly learned the importance of this.

Over the last two decades the role of the United Nations system's operational activities in development cooperation has gradually declined, and disillusionment may lead to further erosion. There is a lack of focus in considerable parts of the system; and the system as such has often evolved in an ad hoc manner in response to temporary needs.

The improved international political climate provides a unique chance for radical reforms giving the United Nations programmes more focus and cohesion and increasing their contribution to economic and social development.

Denmark has demonstrated its support for United Nations efforts in the field of development by contributing financially far more than the size of our economy would indicate. This special interest and our wish to ensure effective utilization of our contributions prompted us in 1988 to set up, together with the other Nordic countries, what is called the Nordic United Nations Project, whose final report was submitted in April this year. The project contains a number of ideas, which we hope will be considered seriously.

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The two main ideas of the project relate to funding and governance of United Nations programmes. The present funding mechanism might be replaced by a mechanism that improved the prospects for forward planning and greater fairness. On governance, the idea is that the present governing bodies of five United Nations organs should be replaced by a single governing body, an international development council. This would not only be a major step towards rationalization of the governance of the United Nations development efforts, but would also provide the scope for improved coordination and coherence.

While the United Nations can make an important contribution to the development of third-world countries, it cannot be a substitute for the integration of these countries into the global economy. Industrialized and developing countries have a common interest in strengthening a free and open world-trade system. Protectionist pressures must be resisted. All countries now need to make a special effort to bring the Uruguay Round negotiations to an early and successful conclusion.

The enhanced status and powers of the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of peace and international security should go hand in hand with an increased humanitarian profile for the Organization. Developments - in particular, those of the past year - have clearly confirmed the need for a much stronger role for the United Nations in the area of humanitarian assistance and relief operations in emergencies. The frequency, extent and complexity of recent disasters - man-made as well as natural - and the accompanying costs in terms of human suffering and loss of life should serve as a powerful impetus for action.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

An essential aim should be to increase the effectiveness of the world community's relief efforts. There has proved to be an urgent need for improved coordination and cooperation between organizations of the United Nations system, other humanitarian agencies and Member States. The situation in Iraq proved this point with alarming clarity.

But improved coordination will not be possible without structural reform and new institutional procedures. We therefore strongly support the creation of a new high-level post, directly under the Secretary-General, with special responsibilities in the area of coordination. The position should be filled by a person with strong authority and personal standing in order to ensure both the necessary coordination and the maximum political backing for United Nations humanitarian operations in situations with conflicting political views and interests.

The United Nations operation in Iraq, set up to provide relief to refugees and internally displaced persons, should be seen as a milestone. The deployment of United Nations guards, aimed at providing security for the United Nations relief workers and property, took place against the background of strong concern about the fate of large groups of people, the fleeing Kurdish population in particular.

It has greatly expanded our understanding of the capacity of the United Nations to assume a stronger role in the humanitarian area. From the outset, Denmark has strongly supported the United Nations operation in Iraq, which was initiated, with imagination and courage, by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan. We are at present the largest single contributor of personnel to the United Nations guards.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

In all too many cases political motives have prevented humanitarian assistance from being received by a country or from reaching population groups who are badly in need of help. Without a fundamental change in our attitude towards such obstacles we shall never be truly successful. It is my strong hope that, inspired by the United Nations operation in Iraq, we shall soon see further progress in recognition of the right of the United Nations to intervene for humanitarian purposes.

Refugee flows, caused by turbulent changes around the world, constitute a large and growing problem. It is becoming more and more obvious that two of the so-called traditional solutions - local integration in neighbouring countries, and resettlement outside the region of origin - are coming increasingly under strain. However, these traditional solutions are still important when such flows occur, and I should like to acknowledge the efforts of many countries - not least the poorest - in shouldering such responsibilities.

Although there are some recent successful examples of the third traditional solution - that of voluntary repatriation - the time has come to take a much closer look at the causes of refugee movements. It is a paradox that those countries, or regimes, whose actions are the root causes of refugee flows are not called upon to shoulder their proper share of the ensuing burden.

The consequences of violations of the most fundamental human rights often give rise to further migration of a more general nature and, therefore, become even more serious. The receiving countries and those who seek to protect refugees find it increasingly difficult to identify and assist the people who are in real need. This may eventually endanger the whole concept of the protection of refugees.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

If we wish to remove some of the main causes of future refugee flows the time has come to extend the notion of State responsibility to include responsibility to create tolerable conditions for one's own citizens and not to dump one's problems on other countries' doorsteps.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is one of the purposes of the United Nations. The violation of human rights in any part of the world is a legitimate concern of all States, the United Nations and the world public at large. Such concern, and the ensuing activity, cannot be considered unwarranted interference in the internal affairs of States.

It is a paradox of international law that, on one hand, a customary rule may have evolved, permitting a State to intervene outside its own territory through rescue missions vis-à-vis its own nationals if they are exposed to grave dangers, whereas, on the other hand, it is still not legitimate to use armed intervention to rescue thousands of innocent persons whose lives are in danger because of their own government's repressive policies.

The deployment of allied units in northern Iraq, on the basis of Security Council resolution 688 (1991), should become a turning-point as regards the balance between the principle of sovereignty and that of humanitarian intervention. I strongly support the following statement contained in the Secretary-General's address in Bordeaux on 24 April this year:

"We are clearly witnessing what is probably an irresistible shift in public attitudes towards the belief that the defence of the oppressed in the name of morality should prevail over frontiers and legal documents."

Those were the right words at the right time.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

I believe that consideration is urgently needed on how the international community should assume its responsibility to take action in the face of massive violations of human rights that endanger the lives of large numbers of innocent people. In situations characterized by such conditions, "internal affairs" must be considered a concept of the past.

I have dwelt at length on what I think are essential reforms of the United Nations system. Let me now turn briefly to some of the areas of serious conflict in the world.

In Yugoslavia, the escalating violence has given cause for great concern. The European Economic Community will continue its mediating efforts through the peace conference in The Hague and the continued presence of its monitors in Yugoslavia. These efforts must be based on the principle of the people's right to self-determination and on the full protection of the rights of minorities. At this time, the Security Council is debating how the United Nations can best support the efforts of the European Economic Community.

The current regime in Baghdad continues to provoke the international community by ignoring Iraq's obligations under international law. The situation of the Iraqi people - and not least the plight of the Kurds and the Shiites - continues to cause deep concern. The international community must insist that Iraq unambiguously adhere to Security Council resolution 688 (1991), attaching special importance to the call for a genuine dialogue with a view to securing basic rights for the entire Iraqi population. The question of whether to relax the sanctions against Iraq must be closely related to its fulfilment of all its obligations under Security Council resolutions 687 (1991) and 688 (1991).

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

The outcome of the Gulf crisis created new opportunities for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question. All parties concerned should seize these opportunities to provide the basis for a just, lasting and comprehensive solution in the Middle East. And the United States-led peace initiative deserves our full support.

We are convinced that with the necessary political will and courage, the parties concerned should be able to overcome the final difficulties concerning the modalities for the peace conference. It is my sincere hope that the parties will refrain from taking any step that might result in new obstacles to convening the peace conference and that they will implement confidence-building measures. In this respect, the G-7 proposal to suspend the Arab trade boycott of Israel in return for a freeze by Israel of its settlement policy warrants special attention.

An additional confidence-building measure would be the repeal of the resolution equating Zionism with racism, a point of contention which for the past 16 years has strained the atmosphere regarding Middle East questions. Denmark wholeheartedly supports efforts to achieve this repeal.

With regard to Cambodia, we are particularly pleased with the decisive progress made in the last few days towards a comprehensive political settlement. We congratulate the five permanent members of the Security Council, the two Co-Chairmen of the Paris Conference - France and Indonesia - and the members of the Cambodia Supreme National Council, under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, for the work they have done.

If, as we confidently expect, the settlement documents are signed on 31 October, the largest United Nations peace-keeping operation of all time will follow. It will be another major test of the ability of the United

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Nations to respond to new challenges. In this case it will be the challenge of bringing peace and democracy to a people who have suffered unimaginable tragedy for too long.

In South Africa, progress towards a non-racial democracy has continued, in spite of difficulties. The legal foundation of apartheid has been scrapped and preparations made for real negotiations on a new constitution. The early convening of an all-party conference should be the next major step towards democracy.

We trust that the United Nations will continue to play a constructive and active role in this historic transformation of South African society. This year the General Assembly has a special responsibility to maintain the unity among Member States in supporting the continuation of progress in South Africa.

Denmark has for many years given assistance to victims of apartheid. We are willing to adapt the nature of this assistance and contribute directly to the establishment of post-apartheid society.

Political and economic changes have been accompanied by a new commitment to protect our planet from environmental degradation and resource depletion. In deciding to convene the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations demonstrated its determination to respond to these new challenges. We have the highest aspirations for the Conference.

The objectives of the Conference and the related negotiations on climate change and biological diversity are shared by all. We have a strong self-interest in protecting the natural resources that will form the basis of future development. And we all share the desire to break the vicious circle of poverty and environmental degradation.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Though all countries share a common responsibility, the responsibility is also differentiated. Industrialized countries must make a special effort to clean our own house and to make sure that measures taken in developing countries support, rather than hamper, their development.

One necessary condition for realizing this aspiration is the full integration of environmental concerns into development strategies. Another is a substantial increase in financial flows to developing countries.

At the meeting in Rio de Janeiro next June, we will make every effort to ensure that the Conference produces concrete, operational results with regard to legally binding conventions on climate and biodiversity and also regarding the processes being initiated by the adoption of "Agenda 21" and the "Earth Charter".

Only a few years ago, many were disillusioned as to whether the United Nations could play a genuine role in solving conflicts and maintaining peace. This has changed dramatically. The world community's confidence in the peace-keeping and peace-building activities of the Organization has grown significantly, and the number of United Nations operations has increased during the past few years.

We have a great responsibility to use this year's General Assembly to consolidate the progress already achieved and to create a strong Organization that can fulfil the aspirations of mankind.

Mr. KAPLLANI (Albania): It gives me particular pleasure, on behalf of the Albanian delegation, to extend to the President my heartfelt congratulations on his election as President of the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. His election is an appraisal of his personal diplomatic qualities and a credit to his country. I am fully confident that his presidency of this session will be effective in realizing the objectives to which the international community aspires.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express our gratitude and high esteem to Mr. Guido de Marco of Malta, who presided over the deliberations of the last session with competence and objectivity.

Allow me also to extend our felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his outstanding contribution to peace and international security and for his persistent endeavours to enhance further the role and efficiency of the United Nations. He will shortly step down from his post, but he will be remembered for the deep imprint he has made upon the Organization.

I am also delighted to welcome the admission to our Organization of the two Koreas, of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania as full-fledged Members. We hope that their membership will make the United Nations more universal and efficient in dealing with the problems before it.

Since the forty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly the international community has been witnessing developments and changes that cannot fail to have an impact on the future of mankind. Especially significant have been the transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, which have brought about the dismantling of political and economic structures that

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had become outdated, the renunciation of the sterile political and ideological stereotypes of the past and the exploration of new avenues to democracy, development and peace.

Today, Europe presents a new political landscape where the words "West" and "East" have merely geographical connotations. Confrontation between the two blocs, which had resulted in a political ice-age, is currently giving way to the human values of democracy, economic and social development, the security of each country and, above all, to the growing assertion of the peoples' aspirations to self-determination.

Although the cold war is already a thing of the past, like some serious "pneumonia," as it were, it has left deep scars on "the lungs" of humankind, and of Europe in particular. It is its very recidivism that makes Croatia cough blood now. It is the repugnant virus of Stalinism that caused Yugoslavia to become the sick man of Europe and Kosova its guilty conscience. Had Europe and the rest of Yugoslavia, where the winds of freedom and democracy are blowing, reacted with proper attention at the right moment and prevented the Serbian national-chauvinists, at least over the past 10 years, from turning Kosova into a testing-ground for establishing their hegemony over Yugoslavia as a whole, things would have been quite different now and we would not have had to deal with the Yugoslav crisis, which is posing a threat to peace and security in the Balkans and in Europe.

Life is showing that the process of rapid democratic changes on a continental level is accompanied with difficulties and often with tensions and even conflict. It is significant, however, that it is no longer the regressive and conservative forces that determine the course of historical events. Nowadays the thirst for democracy, equality among nations and for the

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freedom of the individual have become a driving force of society. Also encouraging is the fact that the international community is becoming well aware of the need to pool its energies and means with a view to coping with the thorny issues of the time, to averting the danger of war and to eliminating those factors that had all but paralyzed international relations over more than four decades. This was clearly manifested in the reaction of the United Nations Security Council and the international community to the occupation of a small country, in this instance Kuwait, by a big and powerful country, Iraq. The Gulf war and the defeat of the aggression there indicated, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, has pointed out in his annual report, that:

> "the only available course is that of organizing international life on a stable basis in accordance with principles clearly understood, generally accepted and consistently applied. The principles are those articulated in the Charter of the United Nations." (A/46/1, p. 5)

It is understandable why the international community is increasingly reaffirming the values of the United Nations, of this universal Organization which has an irreplaceable role to play, especially at the turn of this century when mankind is at such a stage of development where no State or nation can on its own meet the challenges of our time.

For more than four decades, the so-called cold war period, East-West confrontation dominated international political life. In the shadow of that confrontation the Western democracies experienced a period of relative peace and sustained development, something that cannot be said about the Eastern European countries, where the centralized system of the economy and the rule of a single party that identified itself with the State led to stagnation, to

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the curbing and even freezing of the factors that stimulate progress, to the violation of human rights allegedly in the name of the priority of the interests of the collective and the society over those of the individual.

The last decade of the current century began with great hopes for the peoples of Eastern Europe. The Iron Curtain that had divided East and West for many long years has been pulled down, and the winds of change, of freedom and democracy, have begun to blow over the countries of the East. It has already become evident that the systems in those countries failed to meet the expectations of their own peoples. Economic and political reform was a must for the emerging democracies.

In Albania, known as the last bastion of Stalinism in Eastern Europe, the deep democratic processes commenced when the youth and the students, imbued with inexhaustible vigour and aspirations to a more promising future, accelerated the advent of the season of democracy, which has been welcomed by the overwhelming majority of the Albanian people.

Albania is currently living through an important period of transition to democracy. Our aim is not merely the restructuring or renovation of the former system but the setting up of a new and truly democratic system that recognizes and practices the human, political and socio-economic values sanctioned in the documents of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and in other important international acts. Through far-reaching and all-round reforms and constructive cooperation with the European countries and the international community, Albania is moving towards the establishment of a pluralistic democracy based on the rule of law and a market-oriented economy and ensuring human rights and freedoms for the individual. The economic reforms essential for setting up an open market economy are being

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carried out in tandem with social and political reforms intended to bring about fundamental constitutional changes, to lay the groundwork for free and democratic elections and to to achieve the recognition and the enjoyment of basic civil and political rights, including the recognition and protection of private property and independent trade unions. We are aware that the road upon which we have embarked is not easy, but we are convinced that it is the only option to rescue Albania from its backwardness and to realize the all-round political and social development of the individual and of the society as a whole.

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We have today a pluralist Parliament that emerged from the first free democratic elections of 31 March of this year, a National Stability Government, with the participation of representatives from five parliamentary or extra-parliamentary parties. In cooperation with the Parliament, the Government is working intensively to build the legal framework, so indispensable for the success of the economic reforms, being fully aware of the importance of political and social stability. The dynamics of political life in Albania, the extension and enrichment of the spectrum of political parties, the evolution of the views and positions of the electorate, have put on the agenda the holding of new elections which, whenever held, will reflect the political consensus of all the political forces in the country.

At present, Albania is facing a grave economic and social crisis. It is related to the legacy of the failing single-party system, which we have abandoned, as well as with the difficulties of the transition period we are going through. These difficulties arise from the endeavours made to fill the vacuum created by the renunciation of the former system with institutions and structures which respond to the new system we are setting up. It is obvious that the aforementioned vacuum cannot be filled overnight. Hence, the transition period is also accompanied by a crisis of confidence which stems as much from the desire and impatience of the people for speedy changes, as from the inertia which slows down the pace of these changes. It is worth mentioning that this crisis of confidence, along with the economic difficulties, has led recently to an exodus from Albania to neighbouring countries. We have neither encouraged, nor do we want our citizens to flee the country; we are fully convinced that this negative phenomenon can be

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averted through rapid economic development and the establishment of full democracy in Albania. However, under the really difficult economic conditions of our country, understanding, support and assistance by the international community would guarantee the stabilization of such a situation. We appreciate the understanding shown towards the Albanian emigrants, just as we appreciate even more the solidarity, support and assistance of all those who understand the importance of avoiding an economic collapse, which would have a great impact on the future and on the success of democracy in our country.

We welcome and support all the profound democratic changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe. These changes have made it possible to realize the aim of turning the region into a zone of cooperation, confidence and security. The Republic of Albania continues to bring its foreign policy into line with the democratic changes that are being pursued in the domestic field. A distinct feature of this policy is its abandonment of the past legacy and ideological burden which, in fact, distorted it and gave rise to Albania's isolation from the rest of the world. Our current foreign policy is open and unprejudiced and seeks relations of friendship and cooperation with all countries of the world, for the good of our all-round development and international peace and security.

The diplomatic relations and links established only over the last few months with the United States, the European Community, the United Kingdom, Israel, the Holy See and the Republic of Korea are testimony of this reorientation of our foreign policy. Thanks to the democratization process, Albania is filling in the blanks on its diplomatic map and is coming ever closer to the rest of the world.

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Albania's admission in June 1991 as a full-fledged participant to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) was an event of historic significance for us. This testified not only to the vital and universal character of the values this process had brought about, but also to the integral nature of present-day Europe. At the same time, it showed that the European countries are always in search of the best possible ways of development and cooperation among themselves. The main characteristic of this cooperation is the principle of free choice and the balance of national and international interests.

At present, international security is being perceived more and more on a global scale, as closely tied with the unity and indivisibility of peace as with development as the prerogative of stability. The supreme value of international peace is closely linked with the implementation of the principle of the non-use of force in international relations and security for all and constitutes a permanent task of the utmost importance.

As a small country, Albania is highly interested in stability and security in the Balkans, which has suffered - and still suffers - from many problems of a national, political, ethnic and religious character, that are currently so conspicuously evident in the Yugoslav crisis. The long drawn-out crisis in Yugoslavia has been a source of great concern and preoccupation for the international community, especially for the countries of Europe. The concern of neighbouring Albania, with half its population living in Yugoslavia, is a legitimate one. This crisis, which culminated in the outbreak of the conflict and the armed attack by the Serbian and federal army against Slovenia and Croatia, indicated that there can be no real peace in Europe so long as - even in a single country - democratic values and

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commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the principle of self-determination of peoples, are not observed. It is the first time in contemporary history that the federal army of a multinational country has attacked and occupied some of its own integral parts. With the help of the federal army and police, before cracking down on Slovenia and Croatia, Serbia occupied Kosova, a constituent element of the Yugoslav Federation. All this goes to show that peace cannot be established without the decisive commitment of the whole international community.

The free and democratic elections in Slovenia and Croatia, which contributed to the overthrow of the communist regime, also deprived the champions of Greater Serbia of the right to take control of all the most important functions of government, like the army, diplomacy, national security, and so forth. This triggered off a brutal reaction on the part of the Serbian national-chauvinists, who, using the federal army, which is dominated by them, are leaving no stone unturned to get rid of the democratically-elected anticommunist governments. Fear of losing control of the Republic of Kosova has led Serbia to go all out in preventing Kosova and its people from holding free elections. It would promote the final settlement of the Yugoslav crisis if the Albanian people received a guarantee from Europe and its democratic institutions, and the international community, concerning the holding of a referendum, as formulated by the Kosovan Assembly, through its resolution dated 22 September 1991, which proclaims Kosova an independent and sovereign State with a right to constituent participation in the League of Sovereign States or Republics of Yugoslavia. Today, all nations are entitled to be free, independent and unified, provided this is achieved democratically and by peaceful means.

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The very fact that the federal army is acting without constitutional control and the tendency to settle disagreements by force of arms constitute the most dangerous threats to stability in the Balkans and Europe since the Second World War.

Serbia is seeking to unify by force the Serbian population living in various parts of Yugoslavia. It is also using force to keep the autochthonous Albanian population in Yugoslavia under occupation.

While Europe is trying to establish peace in Yugoslavia, Serbia refuses to withdraw from the occupied territories. As far as Serbia is concerned, the only purpose of the Peace Conference is to legalize the occupation of these territories by finding a formula for the self-determination of the Serbian minority in Croatia and denying the same right to the 3 million Albanians who come third to the Serbs and Croats in Yugoslavia.

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The Republic of Albania believes that the solution of the Yugoslav crisis depends on the implementation of the principle of self-determination in a peaceful way through dialogue, on the basis of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the Paris Charter. With that end in mind we have joined in all the efforts of the European Community to solve the Yugoslav crisis and have supported all the initiatives it has taken in this regard.

The free expression of the will of the people constitutes the cornerstone of the new European architecture. Bold and unprejudiced acknowledgement of and, above all, respect for this will would determine the reliable future of Europe. In this context, we support the will of the Albanian people in Yugoslavia, as outlined in the Acts of 2 July and 7 September 1991 of the Parliament of Kosova, the only legitimate organ of the Albanian population.

Now that Slovenia and Croatia have declared their independence and Macedonia and Bosnia-Hercegovina have proclaimed their sovereignty, a new situation has materialized in the Yugoslav State made up artificially of various units following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War. Under these circumstances the Albanians, who comprise the only non-slav population - violently and unjustly incorporated in the composition of this multinational State - should enjoy the right to have their say about their future.

The Republic of Albania holds that the representatives of the Albanian people in Yugoslavia can in no way be excluded from the peace conference on Yugoslavia and from the negotiations on the future of its peoples. Their participation is a right articulated in the current Constitution of Yugoslavia which guarantees Kosova its legitimacy within the federation. Their participation in the talks is not only just but also a must for the future of

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Yugoslavia and the settlement of the Yugoslav crisis. To ignore a population, six times that of the Republic of Montenegro, is to establish peace simply through the force of arms.

It is to the benefit of the peoples of Yugoslavia, the Balkans and Europe if the complex problem of the Yugoslav crisis is solved by taking into account all the factors involved. Neither arrogance and force, nor the pretense of disregarding these factors can keep peoples with different languages, cultures and history together against their will.

Sincerely believing in the peaceful settlement of disputes and conflicts, the Albanian people are confident and hopeful that the international community and the democratic institutions will help in the peaceful and just solution of the Yugoslav crisis, satisfying all the parties to the conflict.

We uphold the understanding displayed by the permanent members of the Security Council and their desire to cooperate in the solution of regional conflicts. We highly value the persistent efforts made by the Secretary-General and the initiatives he has taken for the peaceful settlement of a number of problems. Similarly, we welcome the efforts that are being made by the United Nations and the commitment by the United States and the Soviet Union to peacefully solve regional conflicts such as those in the Middle East, Cambodia, Western Sahara among others. The Albanian Government hails all positive steps leading to the elimination of apartheid in South Africa.

The deepening of the economic crisis in many countries and regions of the world is a destabilizing factor which threatens the hitherto political achievements on an international base. While the industrialized countries are recording economic growth, the developing countries are experiencing economic

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decline and stagnation. To alleviate this tendency and source of contradictions, the United Nations must work out a new strategy for development. Multilateral commitment is vital to finance stabilization programmes, lift trade barriers, transfer modern technology and so on. There is no doubt that these countries should exert their efforts and seriously commit themselves to solve their acute economic problems.

The abuse and illicit trafficking of narcotics has now become a serious concern for all countries. In some of them, this deadly social ill has assumed destabilizing proportions. Often linked to arms smuggling, it has grown into what may be called narcoterrorism. We cannot but express our concern over this phenomenon. We consider that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have an important role to play in preventing it.

Considering the scope and complexity of the transformations and problems facing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the demonstration of greater political and humanitarian solidarity by the rest of Europe and all the other countries of the CSCE is of special importance at present. They can thus build a new European architecture and a new international order which, in turn, would bring about genuine security, peace and prosperity for all in full harmony with common democratic human values.

There is no doubt that the United Nations has to play an important role in this regard. In the new conditions of profound democratic processes taking place in Europe and of the democratization of international relations, our Organization that brings together the hopes and interests of the peoples and countries of the entire world, cannot but reinforce its indisputable commitment to find new, peaceful and democratic solutions to global issues ranging from regional conflicts, disarmament and environmental protection to

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the prevention of terrorism and drug trafficking and to other problems which arise in the course of time. It is as encouraging as it is promising that the Member States of the United Nations are displaying ever greater understanding of the need for active involvement of the United Nations in the solution of the world's problems.

For its part, Albania has totally committed itself to making its own modest contribution to our Organization so that it may achieve the goals for which it was founded and honourably discharge its mission.

Mr. POOS (Luxembourg) (interpretation from French): Our traditional meeting this year in New York is taking on particular significance because of the simultaneous admission of the two Koreas, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands, as well as Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to membership in our Organization. This has accentuated the universal character of the United Nations.

The last page of the post-war period has now been written. The wounds caused by its crimes can now be allowed to heal.

Without prejudice to the analysis given by my colleague, Mr. Hans Van Den Broek on behalf of the European Community and its member States, I should like in my turn to dwell on some of the lessons which can be learned from the evolution of international relations during the past 12 months.

As emphasized by the Secretary-General in his report, we can descry in the world situation, at one and the same time, a degree of peril and of promise.

During the period under review, it has been Luxembourg's honour to preside over the work of the European Community for the first half of this

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year. We cannot fail to note that during those six months the world has witnessed a war of exceptional scope and has witnessed the collapse of one of the super-Powers and, finally, seen the resurgence of the old demons in the Balkans.

As far as the Gulf is concerned, may I recall from this rostrum that the readiness of the Twelve to embark upon a dialogue with Iraq as a last-ditch effort on the basis of the Security Council resolutions was both sincere and total.

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The 12 Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Community were the last ones to confer with our Secretary-General in Geneva before he departed for Baghdad. Upon his return they were the first to be informed of the insurmountable intransigence of the Iraqi dictator. As President Jacques Delors recalled at the time, "We must bear in mind that we should not pay for peace at the price of shame."

Since the very inception of military operations, the Luxembourg presidency has in all circumstances been able to provide and maintain full and frank dialogue with all parties to the conflict. The ministerial troika of the Twelve has never travelled so extensively. They were present immediately after the war in Damascus, in Tripoli and in Tehran. Joint Presidency-Commission missions from the European Community visited the Turkish-Iranian and the Turkish-Iraqi frontiers where the Kurdish people are congregated.

The concept of "security zones" initially mooted in April during an extraordinary meeting of the European Council in Luxembourg and 24 hours later formulated here at our Organization's Headquarters with the assistance of the Secretary-General remains, in the light of the enormity of the tragedy, an operation that is full of promise for the future.

I venture to state that never in the course of the last 20 years of European political cooperation have the Twelve been able to react to events with such promptness and concerted mobilization of effort. The Community could not, on the other hand, act where it had no authority to do so. I am referring to the military operations in the Gulf.

For its part, the Soviet Union has been a constant source of tension and disquiet in the course of the past year. The absence this year of our old

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colleague Eduard Shevardnadze recalls to mind the circumstances that surrounded his resignation at the head of Soviet diplomacy. We are aware now that the departure of this most eminent of the foreign ministers of the Soviet Union indeed coincided with the inception of a period of instability in the Soviet Union that was likely to compromise the promises, the accomplishments and the dividends reaped at the end of the cold war.

Thanks to the men and women in Moscow and St. Petersburg, an oppressive system which has been bankrupt wherever it had been established has today been destroyed once and for all. Thus the tidal wave that spread from Budapest and Prague 24 months ago has swept away the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain and, finally, the Soviet totalitarian colossus. Henceforth, at least in Europe and perhaps for the first time, the words of liberty and democracy have the same meaning and connotation in Madrid as in Prague, in Rome as in St. Petersburg.

A third source of profound concern and danger is represented by the recent tragic turn of events in Yugoslavia. A factor of stability during the long period of the cold war and the unchallenged leader of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Yugoslavia is at present in the grip of domestic upheavals which conjure up the phantoms of the past and the ghosts of conflicts we thought had been laid to rest once and for all. Yugoslavia is on the edge of an abyss. It is caught up in a crucial conflict the outcome of which cannot leave any of us indifferent. The Yugoslav crisis brings to the fore questions which we cannot ignore.

As I recently recalled at the CSCE meeting dealing with the human dimension, which is still going on in Moscow, the self-determination of peoples is quite clearly neither a panacea nor the only prescription for dealing with crises like these. The logic of the Republics shut up within

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their own frontiers contrasts with the logic of peoples and minorities who find themselves living in large territories with vague boundaries.

From these three crises and dangers there are lessons to be learned.

First and foremost, the end of a polarized world. We had already noted this for some time as the antagonisms between the United States of America and the Soviet Union became blurred. At present it is an accomplished fact.

For our Organization, which since its creation has been bedevilled by that antagonism, a new era has been ushered in. The Gulf war has brought to the fore the Security Council's possibilities for action on the basis of consensus among the five permanent members.

Naturally, for those who, hitherto, have made capital out of the impotence of the United Nations, the future looks rather uncertain. The winds of freedom will no longer be checked. In Africa, in Central and Latin America, in Asia, the creative forces of democracy, freedom and reform will finally eliminate the last oppressive regimes which are at bay because they have been condemned.

Dictators of the world, it is midnight.

It is abundantly clear that, in view with what has been happening in the Soviet Union and in Yugoslavia, State structures that are maintained by force alone have hardly any chance of survival. Peoples cannot coexist if there is no freely expressed will. The tragedy of the three Baltic Republics should make this abundantly clear to us.

On the other hand, through the accentuation of national identities we will witness the emergence of new nations and perhaps even unexpected reunifications. Germany, Yemen and, shortly, the two Koreas strengthen my conviction that artificial divisions will finally meet the same fate as any constructions that go against nature.

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In the light of the international norms we have set ourselves through the Covenants, there is another lesson that needs to be learned: an adaptation, unthinkable a short time ago, is nowadays absolutely essential: I am speaking of the duty of humanitarian assistance which was first applied at the time of the Kurdish tragedy. This duty necessarily means that we must rethink our whole concept of the principle of non-interference in a country's internal affairs.

Similarly, the emergence of a new concept - that is, the duty of democratic intervention recently advocated by Mr. Michel Rocard - is along the same lines. Respect for the commitments undertaken in our Charter, which remain our fundamental law, as well as those subscribed to through numerous subsequent texts, should now be capable of sanction.

Nevertheless, legislation in the field of human rights should not be regarded as an end in itself. It is through specific actions, such as those initiated through the Commission on Human Rights, that progress can truly be made.

Among possible orientations I should like to recall for the Assembly's consideration the proposal I made a few days ago in Moscow during the CSCE meeting on the human dimension. That proposal is designed to improve the opportunity to enlist the assistance of special rapporteurs to investigate conflicts. As I see it, this is something that could be done at the request of a specific number of States, even without the agreement of the State involved. Furthermore, every man and woman, wherever they may reside, should have the right to individual recourse against any violation of his or her fundamental rights before the International Court of Justice.

What State would be willing to shirk such obligations at the risk of being outlawed from the family of nations?

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In this context, we must unreservedly support non-governmental organizations which are so courageously fighting for respect for the freedoms and dignity of men and women. Faced with governmental inertia, the initiatives of the non-governmental organizations are often decisive.

In the light of what I have just said, I venture to assert that we are now definitely on the way towards a rebirth of democracy and then also of our Organization.